NVMEN

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

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EDITORIAL CHANGES

The international congress of the "International Association of the History of Religions" meeting in Rome in early September, 1990 made important decisions regarding NUMEN. The Secretary-General of the IAHR, Professor Michael Pye, publically expressed in his official report his appreciation and that of the IAHR for the great care which had been shown for the journal by the outgoing editors Professor R. J. Z. Werblowsky and Professor M. Heerma van Voss. In 1977 C. J. Bleeker had handed over the responsibility for editing NUMEN to Professors van Voss and Werblowsky. Both of these editors (occasionally assisted by Professor Eric Sharpe) had contributed considerably to raising the already high reputation of this journal. Professor Pye then announced that Professor Hans G. Kippenberg and E. Thomas Lawson had been appointed by the Executive Committee to be their successors for the next five years. At the same time the IAHR created a new editorial board consisting of the newly elected Executive Committee of the IAHR. The new board would act in an advisory capacity until 1995.

The new executive editors, Kippenberg and Lawson consider themselves to be continuing and enhancing the excellent work performed by their predecessors. At the same time they intend to inaugurate some significant changes. Besides the small changes already evident in the present issue the executive editors intend to make NUMEN a platform for the discussion and clarification of issues central to the scholarly study of religion. Of particular importance to them are the obvious relationships which the study of religion has with history and the social sciences as well as its radical difference in perspective from theology. We, the new editors, particularly welcome and encourage scholars to utilize NUMEN as an international forum for the discussion of questions of theory and method and the many issues related to them. Although NUMEN already has a solid reputation in historical studies it intends to extend the domain of its interests to include issues in theory and method. We propose to stimulate the theoretical debate and to

encourage the collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on these subjects.

The editors also wish to call to the attention of the scholarly community a resolution passed at the meeting of the General Assembly of the IAHR in Rome. "This Assembly requests the Executive Committee of the IAHR to consider the implications of changing the name of the Association from the International Association for the History of Religions to the International Association for the Study of Religions. The Assembly further requests the Executive Committee to prepare a discussion paper on the proposed change of name for the next meeting of the International Committee in Paris in 1993 with a view to placing a decision to change the name of the Association before the International Committee of the Association at its meeting during the next congress of the Assocation in Mexico in 1995". In proposing the Resolution, Terrence Thomas, Honorary Secretary of the British Association for the Study of Religions, said that he wished to put a matter which had been circulating informally among members of the IAHR for years in the formal agenda of the IAHR. The intention of the proposers of the resolution was for the matter to be thoroughly discussed over the next five years including in the various national associations and that the issue be brought to a vote in Mexico City in 1995.

H. G. KIPPENBERG / E. T. LAWSON

THE MOTHER EARTH CONSPIRACY:
AN AUSTRALIAN EPISODE[1]

TONY SWAIN

Summary

It has become almost a truism in Religious Studies that not only is the belief in a Mother Earth universal but also that this is amongst the most ancient and primordial of all human religious conceptions. Olof Pettersson has criticized the validity of this assumption as a comparative category, whilst Sam Gill has demonstrated the problem in applying the paradigm to Native American traditions. This article extends their re-examination of Mother Earth, taking the particularly revealing case of the Australian Aborigines. It is shown that those academics advocating an Aboriginal Mother Earth have clearly taken this leap beyond the ethnographic evidence with a Classical image in mind, and with either theological or ecologist agendas influencing their thinking. It is further revealed that this scholarly construct has, in only the last decade or so, been internalised and accepted by Aboriginal people themselves. Far from being an ancient belief, it is argued that Mother Earth is a mythic being who has arisen out of a colonial context and who has been co-created by White Australians, academics and Aborigines. Her contours in fact only take shape against a colonial background, for she is a symbolic manifestation of an "otherness" against which Westerners have defined themselves: the autochthonous and female deity of indigenous people against the allegedly world-defiling patriarchy of Western ideology.

Once is happenstance. Twice is coincidence. Three times is conspiracy.

This is the third and it can no longer be denied: something is fundamentally wrong with our understanding of Mother Earth.

The full story, however, is tangled in a long and complex history. I cannot as yet entirely discern how academics have conspired with others such as missionaries, colonialists and third and fourth world peoples themselves, to invent Mother Earth. My two predecessors have pieced together much of the picture, but a great deal remains to be revealed. My own contribution is to write another episode which will, I trust, make it impossible to dismiss the evidence thus far spied out, or worse, to greet it with yet another form of conspiracy at which we academics are so accomplished.[2]

After all, was it not one of the founders of British social science who, when describing his Continental counterpart, was obliged to coin the phrase:

"a conspiracy of silence"?[3]

Doubting Mother Earth

Following that honourable tradition of serialists, let me begin with some highlights from the previous episodes. The first to query Mother Earth was Olof Pettersson. Setting out to chronicle her manifestations in the differing cosmologies of the world, he found himself unable to locate her with any certainty, and so instead turned to investigate her being within the all too often neglected cosmology of academic thought. In particular, he weighed and analysed what has perhaps been the most influential single publication advocating a universal Earth Mother: Albrecht Dieterich's *Mutter Erde*. He discovered that Dieterich (very much in the Frazerian tradition of allegedly solving a riddle from Nemi by burying it beneath a world-wide compendium) had upheld the doctrine of an ubiquitous belief in the Earth as a Divine Mother Goddess primarily because he could not find definite proof of this creed among the people he was originally studying: the ancient Romans and Greeks. It was essential for his argument that Mother Earth be everywhere precisely because she was apparently nowhere at all.[4]

Pettersson largely confines himself to casting doubts upon the theories of one prominent scholar, but recently Sam Gill has produced a far more sophisticated thesis. In *Mother Earth: An American Story*, he not only extends the critique of Dieterich to locate the scholarly concept of Mother Earth within the wider context of Victorian evolutionary social thought[5], but also marries this academic tradition to colonial images of America on the one hand and the Native American invention of Mother Earth in the nineteenth century on the other. His thesis is summarised thus:

> First, I believe that Mother Earth is a central figure in that long saga in which Americans of European ancestry have attempted to define and to create themselves as Americans... [Second] scholars and their studies of Mother Earth, the judgements they have made and the truths they have claimed made sense when placed within the parameters of a myth which they themselves have largely constructed... Finally,... Mother Earth is also Mother to the Indians... [but] she has become so only recently and then not without influence from Americans, with their thirst for land and their need to define themselves in terms of likeness and contrast with those they imagined to be 'the Indians'.[6]

Gill's study is sober, carefully documented and although my highly edited quotation does not capture this element, exceptionally sensitive to the aspirations of those about whom he writes — Native Americans, colonialists and academics. And yet, with all the care in the world, he could not avoid that inevitable review response: "It is a high-risk argument, bound to offend many American Indians and non-Indian historians of religion alike (as well as feminist advocates of a universal, primordial goddess religion)".[7]

There is every reason to suspect that Gill's findings will be greeted by a conspiracy of silence for they sit uncomfortably with current theoretical fashions; fashions set at a time when the Mother is in her popular ascendency. My purpose in writing this paper is not only to try to ensure his Native American data is not passed over, but also to pair it with another case showing uncanny parallels with his own, and thus lead research back towards the kind of wider reconsideration of Mother Earth that Pettersson's study suggests.

My own investigation into Mother Earth is based on Australian Aboriginal data. It is incontestable that Aborigines in the central-north of the continent had the cult of a "Mother of Us All" prior to White Australian invasion of their land, although she perhaps emerged only just before colonisation. I have already documented at length the Indonesian inspiration behind the Aboriginal All-Mother[8] and will not repeat those arguments here. But among the academic records, and in some statements made by Aborigines in the very recent past, I also glimpsed a related yet quite autonomous deity: Mother Earth.

A distinction must be made very clearly here, just as it must be made in the Native American case. As Gill states, there are without doubt a rich variety of female figures and "some of these figures may be identified with fertility and growth" or "the earth and earth's life".[9] Certainly, the Aboriginal All-Mother is of this kind. But this is quite different from saying the Mother *is* the Earth. As we will see, however, and as Gill also maintains, anyone predisposed towards finding Mother Earth will be readily inclined to see her in these female beings.[10] Furthermore, and for related reasons, indigenous people may themselves be inclined to accept this seemingly subtle but in fact quite monumental shift. One central question that must be addressed is: why coloniser and colonised alike are willing to make this leap?

Obviously, the answer lies somewhere in their shared life experience, which brings me to one further observation of how my data complement that of Gill. According to his analysis, the Native American Mother Earth emerged in the early nineteenth century, and his task was made difficult by the imperfection in observation inevitably accompanying such a gulf in time. Sceptical readers of his work will no doubt feel the available evidence is simply too imprecise to pinpoint the appearance of new beliefs. The Australian case, however, illustrates with sparkling clarity what Gill said occurred two centuries ago in America.

For the Mother Earth of the Aborigines is being invented now.

The Pagan Mother Earth Image

The conspiracy itself began a little earlier, however, with academics 'discovering' Mother Earth in Australia. Because the first Australians are not text book examples of her devotees, and because references to an Earth Mother are in fact quite rare in scholarly sources, it is easy to observe precisely the intellectual process whereby those inclined to find such a goddess will see her golden manifestation in any piece of ethnography which glitters.

The first reference to an Aboriginal Mother Earth is to be found in the writings of none other than Dieterich himself. He cites evidence from Spencer and Gillen to the effect that women passing a stone with a round hole in it might be impregnated by the spirit-children residing there. For anyone familiar with desert Aborigines' traditions, to suggest this evinced an Earth Mother would be laughable. For those whose expertise lies elsewhere, I had best explain. Even Pettersson misses the mark somewhat when he suggests, in contradiction to Dieterich, that "it is the dead who return to a woman's womb in order to be reborn".[11] More accurately, the spirit from the deceased returns to a site to which it belongs eternally, but it does not maintain any association as the dead person's spirit. Rather, it has its identity as a spiritual fragment of an Ancestral Being who either deposited its life-essence at a specific place or actually transformed into a site. The point is that the land as a whole is the immanent presence of a multiplicity of these Dreaming Beings. Some are female, some male, but in any

case human reproductive methods are not relevant to them (people do nonetheless, speak of their spirit's site as "Father"). This is a radically pluralistic cosmology, recognising neither hierarchy amongst the Ancestors, nor any overriding unity to space.[12] To speak of a single Earth Mother is not only to totally misrepresent the evidence, but also to negate the principles of desert Aborigines' ontology.

I know of only two other writers who claim a Central Australian Mother Earth. One, Bill Harney, was a great enthusiast and dubious scholar. He wrote in a letter, subsequently published, that Ayers Rock (*Uluru*) revealed "the coming of the Earth Mother which it symbolises. Of how she came and the great rock rose out of the earth around to record the birth of man and reincarnation".[13] To this, that fine student of Aranda traditions, T.G.H. Strehlow, replied implicitly correcting Harney by explaining the underlying loci of desert thought.[14] In his book, *The Story of Ayers Rock*, Harney again makes his Mother Earth claim, although in this instance, paradoxically, she is confined to one site at the rock.[15] But alas, as Layton has noted, Harney's Earth Mother site was in fact the rightful abode of a humble ancestral yam.[16]

Why the confusion? Most likely Harney just got it wrong but there is a possibility he merely failed to appreciate the context of his research. Elsewhere, he betrays himself when writing of 'the Symbols of Uluru' under the heading 'Tales of Contact' and, besides juxtaposing the Earth Mother to a (surely recent) 'Sky Father' god, concludes by describing how he sat with his informant Kadakadeka:

> Around us the camp-fires of the tourists who have come from afar to visit this place. The Mother-place is lonely as her people lead another way of life. The church-bells ring... the Bible is read... the answer is for the future.[17]

The significance of these words will become apparent below.

My remaining instance of a scholar inventing Mother Earth in the Central Desert is indeed intriguing. Géza Róheim, the great psychoanalytic interpreter of Aboriginal traditions, is himself guilty of projecting his longing for a mother into the ethnographic world. Róheim expended considerable energy in 'proving' the Aranda *Alt-*

jira was a High God and in doing so was surely correct, although it can be shown that this belief only emerged after the arrival of the Hermannsburg missionaries.[18] I will leave that controversy to the side for the moment and simply note Róheim's conclusion: "the sky... stands for the ontogenetic representative of the destructive and libidinous forces, viz., the primal scene, because Father Sky and Mother Earth are the parents in the act of cohabitation".[19] This is the first, last and *only* reference to a Mother Earth absolutely essential to his thesis! It seems almost as though he felt that if he could but substantiate one of the pair the other would have automatically been admitted. This says nothing about Aboriginal thought, but a great deal about scholarly presuppositions. It is worth mentioning, for reasons that will become clear further on, that the essay in question is to be found in a volume revealing Róheim's tendency to view comparative studies through Classical cultural glasses.[20] His Australian Sky Father is a "God of the Mysteries".[21]

Before proceeding to some particularly illuminating instances of academic creations of Mother Earth in Arnhem Land, I must for the sake of completeness, cite two further cases from elsewhere in northern Australia. In the first example I can detect no pronounced logic behind the ethnographic slip. Ronald Berndt who, whilst carefully avoiding reference to the Arnhem Land All-Mother as an Earth Mother, said "on Bathurst and Melville Islands, the Earth Mothers are said to have brought the human and natural species and to have introduced their system of social organisation".[22] He has never expanded on this observation or choice of words, although he repeated it virtually verbatim 35 years later.[23] In another place, equally enigmatically, he does note that each of the 5 phratries are "given the name of an Earth Mother" and then lists the names of the 23 clans, 5 of them referring to some aspect of the Mother.[24] This is indeed strange. Hart says the 3 (not 5) phratries are unnamed[25] and Goodale likewise says the 3 (again, not 5) phratries, while sometimes for convenience given the name of a prominent clan, do not have fixed proper names.[26] As for the clans, (Hart names 22, Goodale 24), they all refer to species or natural phenomena. All of Berndt's clan names are of this kind too, except of course for the Earth Mothers. However, it seems Berndt's

woligiwila which he translates as 'Earth Mother', is Hart's *Walikwila* 'stars' (presumably the constellation would have been given), while Berndt's *wulinduwila* 'Earth Mother', is Goodale's *Wilintuwila* 'parrot fish'. As Hart's and Goodale's research was undertaken *both* before *and* after Berndt's, I can only conclude his unpublished fieldnotes on this area are of a lesser quality than his other works. I do not believe his 'Earth Mothers' exist as such—to wit in any case five Mothers cannot be seen as a Mother Earth in the singular.

The second example is a brief reference to Mother Earth in the Kimberley. Significantly, Koepping has himself made substantial comparisons of Classical and Aboriginal thought,[27] although he does not do so in the article to which I am referring. He suggests *Ungud* is both an ancestral female serpent and the earth itself.[28] He notes there is at least an apparent contradiction in his source material. The problem lies with the subtle complexity of the word *Ungud*. Capell (not noted by Koepping) has cast a linguist's eye upon the term and defined it (as does Elkin) simply as the fundamental vital principle of all life.[29] Yet the word can also be used almost as a personal noun. One can say *Ungud* did so and so, when in fact meaning the sacred force or spirit of specific beings (such as the serpent) performed the tasks. *Ungud* approximates that general Aboriginal English term "Dreaming". Thus, to say "we walk upon the back of *Ungud*", to return to Koepping's example, says no more than what all Aborigines assert—they live by the eternal foundation of the Dreaming.

The remaining non-Aboriginal references to a Mother Earth are more telling, all coming from the Arnhem Land where the cult of the All-Mother has overlain in a complementary manner earlier locative traditions. Given the preconception of an Earth Mother it is not difficult to appreciate that researchers would be inclined to discern her in the figure of the All-Mother, but why would such a preconception be present in the first instance? The advocates of Mother Earth in northern Australia provide an answer by the very context of their publications. Firstly, like Róheim and Koepping, in nearly every case they at least allude to Greek, Roman and other comparative traditions. A Classical model of Dieterich's genre seems to provide their, perhaps unconscious, theoretical precedent.

This in itself, however, is not enough. There is also a motivational factor in the academic creation of their own myths. In our case the Aboriginal Mother Earth seems to appeal to non-Aboriginal supporters for two reasons. One is as a symbol of ecological responsibility. The other is for her theological significance.

The Ecologist's and the Theologian's Mother Earth

The ecologist's Mother Earth can be observed in the writings of Roland Robinson and Deborah Bird Rose. Robinson is most famed as a Jindyworobak poet but he also collected much useful ethnographic material from south-eastern and northern Australia. His data is often quite reliable but at times he speaks with a poet's licence. The Mother, *Kunapipi*, is thus said to have risen out of "the sea like the Greek goddess Aphrodite" and to be not only a fertility figure but the Earth itself. "To the Aboriginals", he says, "Earth is the great fertility mother".[30] His chapter entitled "The Earth-Mother", from which I quote, is admittedly Robinson in his most unreliable mode, and elsewhere he presents the same data in a quite sober form.[31] But his excesses have become exceedingly popular since they have been repeated in the glossiest of all books on Aborigines, Jennifer Issac's *Australian Dreaming*.[32] What is intriguing, however, is that his more inventive portrayal of the Mother as Earth begins with an ecological lesson: "While Europe and Asia experienced successions of earth-exhausting and denuding civilizations, Australia was still a mythical, imagined, unknown land. It had never known the tooth of the plough. It had no blood-written histories of succeeding dynasties, no shattered monuments, tombs, or ruined cities buried beneath exhausted earth and invading sands".[33]

The ecologist's Mother Earth has recently been pursued far more fully and explicitly by Rose. Rose is a frequently insightful scholar whose writings have influenced my own thinking. Her stimulating forthcoming monograph on the Victoria River District contains a climactic chapter "Mother Earth", which opens evoking Gaia, not only the Greek goddess, but also the goddess of a new secular ecological consciousness.[34] The message of the chapter is the Aboriginal people of Yarralin's promise of a viable human future

in the face of global disaster, and seemingly at the heart of her argument is Mother Earth. But who and where is the Mother? She is not represented in story, she has no cult and frankly, she is not even necessary to Rose's general interpretation.[35] The only piece of evidence that she exists at all is a statement by her informant Riley Young, that "This ground, he's [she's] my mother. [She's] mother for everybody. We born top of this ground. This our mother. That's why we worry about this ground".[36] Perhaps there is here a (as we will see, very recent) concerned reference to a damaged Mother Earth, but it is more likely that the speaker alluded to, or perhaps generalises from, the concept of *ngabulu*, "milk", or "mother's" country.[37] That so much could be made, once again, of so little reveals a great deal about the impact of scholarly expectations upon our findings.

Two other anthropologists who exceptionally briefly indicate that they have assumed the fertility mother of northern Australia is an Earth Mother, are A.P. Elkin and A. Capell. When discussing "The appeal of the Kunapipi", Elkin states in his introduction to R.M. Berndt's "*Kunapipi*", "We have the Mother, symbolised by the ceremonial 'Mother Place' and in particular the earth womb, the *nanggoru*, for indeed, she is the earth"—for which he offers no evidence, but he then goes on to note the analogy with cults of the 'great Mother of the Ancient East'[38]—an interpretation Berndt conspicuously avoids in the text proper. Capell's statement is equally brief: "Cults such as that of the Earth Mother appear [in North Australia] but not elsewhere, and as they overlay a general bias of normal Australian spiritual beliefs, they are especially intriguing to the student"[39] as evidence for Indonesian influence in the area. Except for the equation of the fertility mother with an Earth Mother, his position is entirely correct.

Neither Elkin nor Capell expand upon these fleeting but nevertheless radical claims. What evidence did they have that the fertility mother, admittedly associated with certain sites and with the ritual ground, was the Earth *in toto*? I think none. Consider the following points, however. Elkin, who attended lectures of the great evolutionist Frazer, and who was trained by the Pan-Egyptian diffusionist Grafton Elliot Smith, believed Australian cultures to be historically connected with those of the ancient 'mystery cults'.[40]

Eliade has asked just what Elkin meant by this term, suggesting the
Greek Eleusinian traditions.[41] Eliade's suspicions are correct,
although, as he specified in a booklet *Christian Ritual*, Elkin
ultimately felt this could be traced to the cults of 21st Dynasty
Egypt.[42] It is indeed likely that Elkin had a Classical model of
Mother Earth in mind, but this is further married to a strong, very
scholarly Christian vision behind Elkin's work, which is equally
present in Capell's. Capell was introduced to Australian
anthropology by Elkin, and his copy of his mentor's book *Aboriginal
Men of High Degree* is inscribed "To Arthur Capell—in appreciation
of nigh on 45 years as friend and fellow worker in Church and
University".[43]

   Capell and Elkin, both Anglican priests, were occasionally happy
to apply anthropology to the task of refining missionary tech-
niques,[44] and it is among liberal missiologists that Mother Earth is
most apparent. Eugene Stockton, a Catholic priest and scholar, has
recently united the ecologist and theological Earth Mothers. In a
booklet searching for a new Australian spirituality, he is critical of
Western attitudes to land use and ownership, evokes the now
fashionable Gaia hypothesis, speaks highly of and quotes copiously
Aboriginal attitudes towards land, and opts to encapsulate all this
in the title, *This Land, Our Mother*.[45] If we discount a preface echoing
Stockton's title, within his text there is only one reference to an
Aboriginal endorsement of his view, a phrase from the Reverend
Djiniyini Gondarra, which I will quote in a moment. Another
serious theological work, edited by Yule, contains Aboriginal
reflections on their land. Many passages refer to the All-Mothers
(the Djang'kawu Sisters), but only one to the land as Mother. This,
however, is chosen for the title *My Mother the Land*.[46] And the
passage? Exactly the same one from Gondarra which has also
singularly supported Stockton's title. A huge task for a total of
exactly 35 words!

   It is time to examine the Aboriginal Mother Earth herself. My
argument so far is that non-Aborigines who felt they have detected
such a being have indicated by certain phrases or theoretical con-
texts that they have a Classical model of an Earth Mother in mind,
and that her appeal is her ecological aptness—the new image of
Gaia—or her theological juxtaposition to Christian faith by liberal

Christians—Stockton thus sees the land as Mother being akin to the Catholic Church as Mother.

What do the ecological and theological Mother Earth have in common? This: they both owe their being to their felicity as symbols of otherness—the natural Earth defiled by Western technology, the Mother of the Land juxtaposed with the Christian God of the Sky, the autochthonous and (allegedly) female against the (alleged) patriarchy of European civilization. In brief, Mother Earth is but a negative image of a stereotype of the Western world and thus, as we will see, she cannot be spoken of in detail without including, at the same time, non-Aboriginal beliefs and culture.

Dieterich himself began his quest following a lead from St. Augustine which proclaimed the Pagan Romans were devotees of an Earth Mother goddess. Whether justified or not, the Classical model of what constituted the Pagan has endured. But today, as faith in the Sky Father of Christendom wanes, and as certain breeds of ecologist and feminist hail all that is 'earth-sprung' or 'feminine', it is an easy matter simply to invert the connotation of Pagan by proclaiming that Augustine—unbeknownst to himself— was indeed right: "these are the mysteries of the great mother earth".[47]

I have shown the part played by scholars and missiologists. I now turn to the Aborigines' role in this conspiracy.

The Aboriginal Invention of Mother Earth

Every instance of Aborigines asserting their belief in Mother Earth of which I am aware is contextualised, either in referring to Christian faith or White Australian destruction of the land or, often, both.

One possible contender as an early Aboriginal Mother Earth is the film title—and *only* the title—*Walya Ngamardiki: The Land My Mother*. The title is in Warlpiri, a Central Desert language, and means, more precisely, "land for mother". Unfortunately, I do not know how the title was chosen. Certainly, the Warlpiri speakers in the film, like the Warlpiri people with whom I have worked, do not speak of a Mother Land (Walya cannot even have the connotation of *the* Earth). Within the film, the closest we come to a Mother

Earth of any kind is the Western Arnhem Land All-Mother, Waramurunggundji, whose emergence from the waters is graphically re-enacted. She is indeed the Mother of all Aborigines in the area, but physically she transformed herself into but one localised site in a pre-existent land. The narrator, Bob Maza, says "the land is still their mother and their father" and "Waramurunggundji is our mother; we must look after her". Which perhaps approaches but clearly does *not* substantiate the Earth Mother image of the title. Possibly, here is a germ of that belief, and the context provides everything the doctrine needs to flourish. The film is a trans-regional compilation of Aboriginal attitudes towards land specifically produced to aid the cause of Land Rights and to protest White destruction of their territories. Pollution and the mining industry are as symbolic of Whites in the film as the Mother is of Aborigines.[48]

Another promise of doctrines to come was provided by the famous Aboriginal writer, Kath Walker (now Oodgeroo Noonuccal) in her children's book *Father Sky Mother Earth* (1981).[49] It is a creation story in which the two beings of the title give birth to the natural world. All is well until one day high-technology-endowed humans (Whites as such are not mentioned) destroy the ecological balance with guns, bulldozers and pollutants—all culminating in an image of Mother Earth's body pierced with placards erected in her defense. While having a mythic narrative form, Walker's story is primarily presented as a meaningful piece of fiction for young readers. The step to myth proper was soon to be taken by Noonuccal, but others seem to have made that jump in print before her.

The earliest unambiguous reference to an actual belief in a Mother Earth which I have encountered is the phrase used by Djiniyini Gondarra which sparked the title to two separate pamphlets noted above. He said:

> The land is my mother. Like a human mother, the land gives us protection, enjoyment, and provides for our needs—economic, social and religious. We have a human relationship with the land: Mother-daughter, son.[50]

Gondarra is Australia's most noted indigenous theologian. He has produced two booklets of theological reflections, was educated at a

mission school and has undertaken theological training in Papua New Guinea. He was, in 1983-4, a lecturer in theology at Nungalinya College and is currently Moderator of the Northern Synod of the Uniting Church.[51] It is reasonable to suspect, therefore, that his statements on Mother Earth are refined, and possibly consciously groping for a relevant bridge between Christian thought and post-colonial life and tradition. Returning to the work already quoted, the passage immediately moves onto themes of dispossession, the theology of Mother Earth and her ecological message.

> When the land is taken from us or destroyed, we feel hurt because we belong to the land and we are part of it. [White] church leaders have been encouraging me to write on Aboriginal theology of the land. When we become Christians, we see more clearly our relationship with the land and with God. It was God who entrusted the land to our ancestors. We were living in the land of plenty, like first creation people. We had our own technology, our own social laws, our own pattern to follow. Life was so beautiful before.
>
> I'm sorry to say it, but I picture oppressors, both yolngu [Aboriginal] and balanda [White], coming into our garden of Eden like a snake. Satan used the snake as his instrument to tempt God's people and to try to destroy God's plan for his people. The bad influence came in breaking our relationship with God, with man, and the Land. We never dreamed that one day the bulldozers would come in.[52]

Mother Earth is not referred to again. Nor is she present in the author's booklets *Father You Gave Us The Dreaming* (1988) and *Series of Reflections of Aboriginal Theology* (1986)[53], although the latter includes a discussion of "theology of the land" in terms of a plurality of 'totems'. It seems evident, then, that Gondarra's reference to "the Land is my Mother" is used in a broad impressionistic sense in a way to define Aboriginal traditions against the Christian Sky Father, who in his theology breathed life into the Dreaming, and yet who also allowed the fall of the destructive processes of invasion. But there is apparently no mythic substance to his Mother Earth.

All these elements are amplified in my next example. In the Native American story, Gill begins by summarising the most

familiar images of her being, such as Smohalla saying ''Shall I take
a knife and tear my mother's bosom... Shall I dig under her skin
for bones?... How dare I cut off my mother's hair?''[54] In Patrick
Dodson's words, the mood is identical.

> As the land was ring-barked and cleared so we were stripped bare of
> all that was precious and priceless. Life itself was being chained
> down.
>   The heart was slowly being pierced and living was being
> substituted with existence, shame and hopelessness. The land herself,
> our Mother, was being despoiled and defiled—she cried in sorrow
> and with despair for us, her children, the Aboriginal and Islander
> people.[55]

Patrick Dodson, one-time Catholic priest and Director of the
Central Lands Council and currently commissioner to the the
Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, is a creative
political and theological thinker. His vision embraces a region con-
sisting of two ethnic groups—''Aboriginal and [Torres Strait]
Islander people''—the children of Mother Earth. The passage
comes from an article addressed to Aboriginal Catholics specifically
and Christians generally, asking them to recognise that the
bicentenary celebrations are ''grounded in the original sin of the
theft of our lands''.[56]

The ecologist's Mother Earth is evident in Dodson's thinking,
but so too is the theological Mother. The only other reference to the
Mother Land in his work is in the title of an article, ''The Land
Our Mother, The Church Our Mother'', also published in 1988.[57]
The text itself says nothing to provide any mythic substance to the
shadowy Mother, although it does state ''when the child is born he
calls that part of the country 'Father' ''![58] The inspiration for his
title may have come from many sources, but is possibly indirectly
linked to that statement of Gondarra's which gave rise to Stockton's
booklet. Elsewhere, Stockton had written that for Aborigines, ''the
Land was their Father and Mother'', and that he hoped the
message of ''the Holy Father has triggered a process, by which the
Aboriginal people... are caught up by their true Mother to be
reborn, truly Christian and truly Aboriginal'', and this was an arti-
cle with which Dodson was familiar.[59] It hardly matters. The point
is that his statements were published in *Land Rights News*, a

newspaper with a print run of some 20,000 copies,[60] and probably read carefully by the vast majority of literate Aborigines.

Another purely theological Mother Earth has been created by the renowned artist Miriam Rose Ungunmerr. One of her pieces is ''The Hail Mary''. In it is a central star around which brown and black colours are arranged along with many other icons. She says of her work:

> The brown and black are earth colours and so suggest the Earth-Mother—the spirit in Aboriginal religion from whence all life comes. The Earth-Mother is akin to God. Grace is God's life in us. Hence, 'full of grace' is represented by Mary (the Star) embedded in the Earth-Mother, the Supreme Spirit, God.[61]

A sophisticated and thoughtful piece of theology indeed. My purpose, however, is merely to note that once again the Mother Earth being is co-joined with that of the Father-Spirit, God. Whereas for Dodson's Catholicism, the Mother was the Church/Land for Ungunmerr it is Mary/Land. A reconciliation would, of course, be unproblematic.

Dodson's widely published and very catchy titles and phrases will do much to ensure Mother Earth becomes a deity of which most literate Aborigines are aware. What could exceed the impact of his widely distributed publications? One contender must be the Aboriginal presentation at World Expo in Brisbane in 1988, and the accompanying publication entitled *The Rainbow Serpent* by Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) and her son Kabul Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Vivian Walker).[62] Unlike her earlier work, this piece celebrates a solo Mother Earth.

> I see you come into sacred place of my
> tribe to get strength of the Earth
> Mother. That Earth Mother...
> We are different you and me. We say the
> Earth is our mother—we cannot own
> her, she owns us.

The story that follows is a pan-Aboriginal medlée. We begin with *Alcheringa*, a Central Desert (Aranda) word which is equated (following a common mistranslation[63]) with 'Dreamtime'. The accompanying picture is from Arnhem Land, as are some of the

references to the Rainbow Serpent on the following page. Before
long we have picked up Baiami, the All-Father confined to parts of
the south-east, although said here to be the sun and known
throughout Australia.[64] There are also Ancestral Beings from
Queensland, and so on. The significant fact in all this is that the
various elements are smoothly brought into a simple macro-myth
bound together by the literally underlying Mother Earth.

A little over half-way through this glossy booklet, the machine
age intervenes. The critique is gentle. Machines are not con-
demned, but they must not be allowed to dominate the spirit.

> I will
> always come back to this
> place to share the feeling of
> the land with all living
> things. I belong here where
> the spirit of the Earth
> Mother is strong in the land
> and in me.

At this point we are asked to allow the land spirit to touch us all
so that the way of Mother Earth may once again thrive. There is
no esoteric lore here, no myths to be revealed, but rather an appeal
to the affections and softly allowing the Earth itself to speak.[65]

Mother Earth in the Third Century AC [After Colonisation]

Since Australia's bicentennial year, when Dodson and Noonuc-
cal made their immensely public statements, I have come across
Aboriginal Mother Earths on five occasions. (I write this in mid-
1990, eighteen months later).

My first two instances are exceptionally brief in form but
nonetheless destined to add great weight to the awareness of
Aboriginal Mother Earth. One will be found on the cover slip of
Yothu Yindi's album *Homeland Movement*. In words very reminiscent
of Gondarra's "we have a human relationship with the land:
Mother - daughter, son", the cover slip states: "Yothu Yindi,
meaning 'Mother & Son' or 'Children of the Earth' represent
Australia's brand of world music".[66] This is hardly a systematic
theology, but is perhaps more powerful as a bald statement of

credo, announcing to the world that Aboriginal people are children of the Earth, their Mother.

The second example I have recently seen was in a draft for a state school's syllabus with a strong emphasis upon the brutalities of White history and Aborigines' contrasting care for the land. A focus of this discussion, rated second only to the concept of the 'Dreaming', was "The Land as Mother". No more is said—again, the credo form—but if implemented this will be taught to school children, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, throughout that state.[67]

My remaining examples are more expansive. First, there is a brief film clip made on behalf of conservationists protesting the logging near Eden in New South Wales. The film-makers' aim was to present an Aboriginal view of the land in the area, and the film's spokesperson is Benjamin Cruse of the Eden Land Council (who is also a Christian). Cruse says:

> When the Aboriginal people said the Earth was their Mother they really treated her as though she was their Mother and when they died they'd go back into the Earth and live on in the trees and the rocks and the valleys, and that's why there was such high respect and high regard for those sacred places.

Forestry, Cruse concludes, is thus "total disregard for the Aboriginal people and the way they feel about their Earth". Nothing is said of the Mother, and her identity here is exclusively as the rather passive enemy of those who would destroy 'nature'.[68]

My next example is provided by Eve Mungwa Fesl, a descendant of the Aboriginal people of the south coast of Queensland, and a linguist who currently teaches at Melbourne University. She has written what I believe to be the first statement by an Aborigine which tries to encapsulate the general tenor of Aboriginal Religion. It is called "Religion and Ethnic Identity: A Koorie View" and already it has been republished.[69]

The article makes the intriguing and perceptively candid statement that Aboriginal religion must be examined in relation to Aboriginal experiences of non-Aborigines and the latter's views of the beliefs of the first Australians. The discussion which follows is a vitriolic critique of colonialists and missions, but "despite the concerted attempts to wipe out Koorie Spirituality, it lived on. The

form *of expresssion has changed*, but the strength of this spirituality is still strong in urban as well as rural Koories".[70] Acute observation and surely true.

The remainder concerns land, incontestably what has underpinned Aboriginal religion but in Fesl's case what has more specifically "underpinned the land *rights* movement". Her discussion is, I think it fair to say, both very general and very critical. Unlike Whites, Aborigines did not have wars, or develop war technology. "In their frenzy to make money, they are destroying not only that which is sacred to us, but are killing the earth which nurtures all living things".[71] The strongest positive expression of faith in the article is found in two poems, and in this literary form (and *only* there), Mother Earth appears. I quote from both pieces. The first, "Inheritance", is a positive celebration:

> Daughter of the Sea and Land am I
> —the Land my Mother, my soul.
> In my inheritance she gives to me—Rights
> to care for her...
> A right not buyable, nor sellable
> A total commitment forever.
> My inheritance to care for her
> The sea, the Land, My life, My Mother.

The second, "The Dying Land", closes her article and is something of a eulogy. It begins:

> As the forest giants fall throughout the world
> And the air grows hotter
> Our Mother the Earth sighs in pain

And ends:

> In firing weapons to kill his sister, his brother
> The technocrat harms his Mother, the Nurturer.
> As he marvels at his skills, the Land lies dying.[72]

What we witness here is precisely what Fesl says is also happening to non-Aboriginal traditions: "Many world religions have begun a *re-think* about their own attitude to the planet and how their religious writings have been *interpreted in terms of caring for the planet*".[73]

My final instance is provided by Anne Pattel-Gray, Executive Secretary of the Aboriginal and Islander Commission (Australian Council of Churches). It is a statement made at an international conference on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in Seoul, 1990. Pattel-Gray begins with a mytheme of a great White spirit God who ''created the world'' and established the biblical-like laws which sustained a paradise for 40,000 years. Then White people destroyed the Aboriginal Eden. Enter Mother Earth.

> My people became more and more distressed at the sight of the White men raping, murdering and abusing their Mother Earth through mining. We knew the price they would pay for abusing the Mother Earth. We knew there would soon be floods, drought, earthquakes and famine because Mother Earth had to retaliate in the only possible way that she knew how.[74]

Again:

> We still fight against the destruction of our land and the abuse to our Mother Earth, and on a wider scale, we now believe the world is starting to see what their destruction has done to our Mother Earth... As believers in God, should we not be taking up our swords for justice, peace and the integrity of creation?[75]

God creates, Whites destroy, Mother Earth endures, Aborigines understand. Take any one of the components of this quaternity away, and the integrity of the image is lost.

These are the only recorded Aboriginal affirmations of Mother Earth which I have been able to locate, but there are no doubt many others in lesser-known published accounts, and new statements are almost certainly being written at this very moment. I have, furthermore, not attempted to cite oral sources to evince the conspicuously increasing frequency with which I have heard Aboriginal people speak of their Earth Mother in the past few years. My sample will suffice, however. Each of the Aboriginal pieces I quote are manifestations of the Ecologist or Theological Mother Earth, sometimes both. Furthermore, their appearance in such prominent places—the largest circulating publication addressing Aboriginal groups, pop records, slick, glossy books, films, school curriculi, the first Aboriginal statement on Aboriginal religion in general, World Expo displays and international

speeches—raises the destiny of Mother Earth to a deity who will be
acknowledged by most Aborigines. Her Aboriginal advocates are
prestigious and creative people reading the pulse of political
Aboriginal life and the pan-Aboriginal spirit. And academics and
theologians, having co-created her in the first instance, are only too
keen to amplify every reference to their happily received
inheritance.

Make no mistake. The Aboriginal Mother Earth is here to stay.
Her voice, now a whisper, will be heard more widely and clearly
soon, speaking not only for Aborigines themselves but for a world
of ecologists, goddess worshippers, academics and others who today
seek wisdom from astral lands. In the home of myth and ritual, the
Mother without story or celebration will ascend.

The conspiracy *will* succeed.

Conspiracy. A nasty word. ''To unite for evil purpose'', my dic-
tionary says, ''to plot, to scheme''. A word for the deceitful, the
faithless and the treacherous.

I have chosen the word with care—in order to redeem it. And at
the same time, perhaps to redeem history a little, too. Why is it that
Gill's reviewer felt his argument would offend Native Americans,
scholars and feminists? Not because he refused to acknowledge
Mother Earth (which he did not, no more than I) but because he
celebrated her birth and in so doing brought together scholars, col-
onialists, and indigenous people. His offence was uniting under one
banner what had been deemed polarities. People of European des-
cent and fourth world peoples—a shared cosmology transcending
boundaries, imagined or real. Mary Douglas says: this is a dirty
thing to do.[76]

To come together, more evocatively, to breathe together—the
Latin *conspirare*, 'conspire'. Or should we also consider *spiritus* not
only as breath but soul: ''To come together in spirit''. How much
more appropriate than those un*animated* (*anima* being a related
term - breath, life, soul) terms ''syncretism'' or ''synthesism'',
which conjure something of intellectual confusion amongst others.
Only in conspiriting do we share in a creative, potent, coming
together.

To suspect I have written to refute or debunk Mother Earth is
wrong. The people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, whom I cite,

are mostly thinkers for whom I have great respect; some are my col-
leagues and friends. But I do believe in history and the importance
of chronicling the emergence of beliefs.

Pettersson was faced with the daunting task of attempting to
understand how a Victorian mind came to grips with the alleged
Mother Earth of the Classical age. Even Gill was obliged to depend
in part upon the inadequate scholarship from two centuries ago.
My task has been easy. I have confirmed their arguments simply
by sitting back and watching as history repeats itself.

Department of Religious Studies,   TONY SWAIN
University of Sydney, N.S.W. 2006

¹ Looking over what I had written I was surprised to discover how
'unacademic' my data were. Besides some obscure or forthcoming books and
articles, it consists, in bulk, of references to reviews, letters, personal communica-
tions, book insignatures, films, pamphlets, missiological tracts, newspaper
articles, World Expo displays & pamphlets, sermons, poems, record cover-slips,
school syllabus and photo-copied commentaries on paintings. For their invaluable
help in locating some of this data, my especial thanks to Eugene Stockton and Jani
Klotz.
    ² See W.E.H. Stanner on "the great Australian silence" in *After the Dreaming*.
(Sydney: ABC, 1969), p. 25.
    ³ J.S. Mill, *Auguste Comte and Positivism*. (Michigan: Univ. of Michigan Press,
1961 [1865]), p. 199.
    ⁴ A. Dieterich, *Mutter Erde: Ein Versuch über Volksreligion*. Berlin: E. Ferle, 1905);
O. Pettersson, *Mother Earth: An Analysis of the Mother Earth Concept According to
Albrecht Dieterich*. Scripta Minora, Regiae Societatis Humanorum Litterorum
Lundensis, 3 (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1965-6).
    ⁵ On this matter see E. Free, "The Sexual Politics of Victorian Social
Anthropology". In *Darwin to Einstein: Historical Studies on Science and Belief*, edited
by C. Chant and J. Fauvel, pp. 195-213. (Essex: Longman, 1980).
    ⁶ S. D. Gill, *Mother Earth: An American Story*. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press,
1987), pp. 155-157.
    ⁷ T. Buckley, "The Goddess that stepped forth from the World". *History of
Religions* 28 (1989): 357-359, p. 359.
    ⁸ T. Swain, "The Earth Mother from Northern Waters". *History of Religions*
30,3 (1991), in press. A small part of the data used in this article is referred to in
the closing section of its predecessor.
    ⁹ Gill, *Mother Earth*, p. 154.
    ¹⁰ *ibid.*, chapter 6.
    ¹¹ Pettersson, *Mother Earth*, p. 24.
    ¹² A concise view of these Aranda principles can be found in T.G.H. Strehlow's
Central Australian Religion: Personal Monototemism in a Polytotemic Community.
(Adelaide: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1978).

¹³ W.E. Harney, letter to M. Sawtell, 21st April, 1958, cited in T.G.H. Strehlow, "Mythology of the Centralian Aborigine". *The Inland Review* 3 (1969): 11-17, 19-20 and 25-28, p. 16.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, *passim*.

¹⁵ W.E. Harney, *The Story of Ayers Rock*. (Melbourne: Bread and Cheese Club, 1957).

¹⁶ R. Layton, *Uluru: An Aboriginal History of Ayers Rock*. (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1986), p. 13.

¹⁷ W.E. Harney, *Tales from the Aborigines*. (London: Robert Hale, 1959), p. 189.

¹⁸ I cannot enter this controversy here. Suffice it to say for the moment that the word *Altjira* was first mentioned by the missionary L. Schultz ["The Aborigines of the Upper Middle Finke River", *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia* 4 (1891): 210-246, p. 239]. As W.B. Spencer and F. Gillen note [*The Arunta: A Study of a Stone Age People* (London: Macmillan, 1927), Appendix D] missionaries selected this word, meaning 'eternal', to translate as 'God' (p. 596). That there are sky dwellers in the region is unproblematic. The mission influence seems to have been to raise their status to eternal All-Fathers.

¹⁹ G. Róheim, "Primitive High Gods". In *The Panic of the Gods and Other Essays*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 103.

²⁰ See, for instance, "Aphrodite, or the Woman with a Penis". In *ibid*.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 69.

²² R.M. Berndt, *Kunapipi: A Study of an Aboriginal Religious Cult*. (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1951), p. 13.

²³ R.M. Berndt, "Australian Religions: An Overview". In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by M. Eliade, Vol. 1, pp. 529-547 (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 542.

²⁴ R.M. and C.H. Berndt, *The World of the First Australians*. 2nd ed. (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1977), p. 67.

²⁵ C.W.M. Hart, "The Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Islands". *Oceania* 1 (1930): 167-180, p. 177.

²⁶ J.C. Goodale, *Tiwi Wives: A Study of the Women of Melville Island, Northern Australia*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 19, n. 6.

²⁷ K-P. Koepping, "Religion in Aboriginal Australia". *Religion* 11 (1981): 367-391, makes several comparisons with Classical religions and concludes advocating the incorporation of Aboriginal thought into a less parochial model of a 'common humanity' (p. 385). See also his comparison of Aboriginal and Platonic "Anamnesis" in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 1, 253-261.

²⁸ K-P. Koepping, "Ungarinyin Religion". In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 15, pp. 134-138, p. 136.

²⁹ A. Capell, "Mythology in Northern Kimberley, North-West Australia". *Oceania* 19 (1939): 382-404, p. 349; *Cave Painting Myths: Northern Kimberley*. Oceania Linguistic Monograph no. 18 (Sydney: Univ. Sydney Press, 1972), p. 2-3; A.P. Elkin, "Rock-Paintings of North-West Australia". *Oceania* (1931): 257-279, p. 276-7.

³⁰ R. Robinson, *The Australian Aboriginal*. (Sydney: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1977), p. 18.

³¹ *idem*, *The Shift of Sands: An Autobiography 1952-62*. (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1976), p. 203-4; *Legends of the Dreaming: Legends of the Dream-Time of the Australian Aborigines*. (Sydney: Edwards and Shaw, 1967) p. 47.

³² J. Isaacs, *Australian Dreaming: 40,000 Years of Aboriginal History*. (Sydney: Landsdowne Press, 1980), p. 58-9. Her section on "The Earth Mother" refers to

the All-Mother but provides no evidence for an Earth Mother. Among her sources only Robinson had suggested that an Earth Mother existed and it seems Isaacs has taken the idea from him.

³³ Robinson, *The Australian Aboriginal*, p. 17.

³⁴ D. Rose, *Dingo Makes Us Human*. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming [1991]), chapter 13, p. 399 of ms.

³⁵ See also *idem*, "Consciousness and Responsibility in an Australian Aboriginal Religion". In *Traditional Aboriginal Society: A Reader*, edited by W.H. Edwards, 257-269. (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1987), where, on p. 260, Rose merely asserts "the origins of all life ... derive from one mother, the earth".

³⁶ *idem, Dingo Makes Us Human*, p. 421.

³⁷ I am indebted to Francesca Merlan for this interpretation based on her own anthropological and linguistic research in the Victoria River district.

³⁸ A.P. Elkin, "Introduction". In *Kunapipi* by Berndt, p. xx-xxi.

³⁹ A. Capell, "Early Indonesian Contacts with North Australia". *The Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia* 3 (1965): 67-75, p. 69.

⁴⁰ A.P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1964), p. 253.

⁴¹ M. Eliade, *Australian Religions: An Introduction*. (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1973), p. 27-8, n. 45.

⁴² A.P. Elkin, *Christian Ritual*. (Morpeth, N.S.W.: The St. John's College, 1933), pp. 3-7.

⁴³ This copy is now in my possession. The insignature is dated 20th Sept., 1977.

⁴⁴ e.g. A.P. Elkin, "Missionary Policy for Primitive Peoples". *Morpeth Review* No. 27 (1931); A. Capell, "Interpreting Christianity to Australian Aborigines". *International Review of Missions* 39 (1959): 1-11.

⁴⁵ E.D. Stockton, *This Land, Our Mother*. CCJP Occasional Paper No. 9 (Sydney: Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, 1986).

⁴⁶ I.R. Yule (ed.), *My Mother The Land*. (Galiwin'ku, N.T.: Christian Action Group, 1980).

⁴⁷ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 7, chap. 24. I quote from J. Healey's translation (London: Dent, 1945), p. 215.

⁴⁸ David Roberts (Producer), *Walya Ngamardiki: The Land My Mother*. (Film Australia, 1978).

⁴⁹ K. Walker, *Father Sky, Mother Earth*. (Milton, Qld: Jacaranda Press, 1981).

⁵⁰ in *My Mother The Land*, p. 8.

⁵¹ For bibliographical details, see my entry on Gondarra in *Who's Who of Religion*, edited by J. Hinnells. (London: Macmillan, forthcoming).

⁵² in *My Mother The Land*, p. 8-9.

⁵³ Both published by Bethel Presbytery of the Northern Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia.

⁵⁴ cit. Gill, *Mother Earth*, p. 1.

⁵⁵ P. Dodson, "Where are we after 200 Years of Colonisation?" *Land Rights News* 2 (6): 1988: p. 5.

⁵⁶ *loc. cit.*

⁵⁷ P. Dodson, "The Land Our Mother, the Church Our Mother". *Compass Theology Review* 22 (1988): 1-3, reprinted from *Land Rights News*.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵⁹ E.D. Stockton, "Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Sydney". *Faith and Culture* (1988): 163-173, p. 170. Stockton (personal communication: 13th Sept., 1989) notes Dodson was familiar with this article. I must stress there is *not the slightest*

concern amongst the authors as to who first coined the phrase, and Stockton's suggestion was generously offered at my request simply in order to help me trace the recent history of the idea of Mother Earth.

⁶⁰ The publishers have informed me that print runs have varied between 16,000 to 22,000 copies for issues over the last few years.

⁶¹ A black and white photograph of the painting and Miriam Rose Ungunmerr's commentary were kindly provided by Eugene Stockton.

⁶² O. and K.O. Noonuccal, *The Rainbow Serpent*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988), no pagination.

⁶³ For careful linguistic insights on *Altjeringa*, see T.G.H. Strehlow, *Songs of Central Australia*. (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1971), p. 614-5.

⁶⁴ On Baiami, see my "A New Sky Hero from a Conquered Land". *History of Religions* 29 (1990): 195-232.

⁶⁵ I have drawn attention to the fact that traditional Aboriginal religious attitudes towards land were *not* based on affection in "Dreaming, Whites and the Australian Landscape: Some Popular Misconceptions". *Journal of Religious History* 15 (1989): 345-350.

⁶⁶ Yothu Yindi, *Homeland Movement*. (Australia: Mushroom Records, 1989).

⁶⁷ This is not a public document and I will not specify details. The draft syllabus was offered for year 11-12 students and was dated 1989.

⁶⁸ Maryella Hatfield (director), *Eden*. (Australian Film, Television and Radio School, 1989).

⁶⁹ E.M.D. Fesl, "Religion and Ethnic Identity: A Koorie View". In *Religion and Ethnic Identity: An Australian Study (Volume II)*, edited by A.(I.). Ata, 5-10. (Burwood, Vic.: VICTRACC Publication, 1989); also in *Bridges of Peace—Australia WCRP Newsletter*, March (1990): 1-5.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 7 [Ata (ed.) version].

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷² The poems are on pages 8 and 10 of *ibid.*

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷⁴ A. Pattel-Gray, "Aboriginal Australian Presentation on JPIC". *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation: Sermons and Speeches*, 53.1 (1990): 1-3, p. 2.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷⁶ M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970).

F. MAX MÜLLER AND A. B. KEITH:
"TWADDLE", THE "STUPID" MYTH,
AND THE DISEASE OF INDOLOGY

HERMAN W. TULL

Summary

   Despite the recent scrutinization of the history of Indology (under the guise of its parent Orientalism), Indology in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the period when scholars in the West completed the first serious assessment of the Veda, remains largely unexplored. This period's legacy—dictionaries, critical editions, grammars, translations, and even academic chairs—remains the backbone of Vedic studies to this day.
   The nature of Indology during this period is reflected with special clarity in the work of F. Max Müller and A. B. Keith. Müller's *editio princeps* of the Rgveda-saṃhitā, and Keith's magnum opus, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, represent the beginning and end points of Indology—with its peculiar emphasis on the Vedic texts—during this period. Müller and Keith are also exemplars of what is perhaps the most curious feature of Indology in the latter half of the nineteenth century, namely, the often begrudging marriage of German and British scholarship. The discomfort that arose from this alliance was sharpened by the subject matter itself, India, into what might be termed the *disease* (appropriating Müller's term) of Indology. This disease, which combined alternating phases of awe and revulsion toward the Indian tradition, can be seen in the approach Indologists of the last century took to the Vedic texts; by representing the earliest portions of the Vedic tradition as belonging to their own glorified past, they separated it (and further affirmed their appropriation of it) from the later Hindu (beginning with its representation in the Brāhmaṇa-texts) tradition—a tradition they characterized, and abandoned, as nothing more than "twaddle" and "stupid" myths.

> "Scholars also who have devoted their life either to the editing of the original texts or to the careful interpretation of some of the sacred books, are more inclined, after they have disinterred from a heap of rubbish some solitary fragments of pure gold, to exhibit these treasures only than to display all the refuse from which they had to extract them."[1]

   The study of the history of Indology, under the guise of a larger program known as Orientalism, has lately become a topic of intense scrutiny.[2] The major studies that have appeared in this field, however, stop short of the latter half of the nineteenth century, the

period in which scholars in the West completed the first serious
assessment of the Veda.[3] Although these texts had, as Raymond
Schwab notes, ''from the start been the big game of the hunt,''[4]
after more than a century of misdirection this quest was nearly
abandoned with Henry Colebrooke's disheartening proclamation
that the Vedas ''are too voluminous for a complete translation of
the whole; and what they contain would hardly reward the labor of
the reader; much less that of the translator.''[5] The success achieved
in the latter half of the nineteenth century resulted chiefly from the
establishment, in Great Britain, France, and Germany, of
academic chairs for the study of Sanskrit and comparative
philology.[6] Under the aegis of these chairs a group of scholars
vigorously devoted themselves to the investigation of the Vedic
texts. The legacy of these scholars—dictionaries, critical editions,
grammars, translations, and even academic chairs—remains the
backbone of Vedic studies to this day.[7] Seen in another way, the
practice of Indology in the latter half of the nineteenth century
represents a bridge between modern scholarship and that of the
previous century when Orientalism established itself; consequently,
by looking to this period, the seminal one for Vedic studies in the
West, the degree to which the principles of Orientalism continue to
shape the work of Indology today can be assessed.[8]

   The nature of Indology in the latter half of the nineteenth cen-
tury is reflected with special clarity in the work of F. Max Müller
and of A. B. Keith. Max Müller's *editio princeps* of the Ṛgveda-
saṃhitā (1849-74) fulfilled one of the foremost desiderata of the first
generation of European scholars to study the Veda.[9] Although the
prolific Müller referred often to the Ṛgveda, besides his Sanskrit
edition of the Ṛgveda and its Prātiśākhya, his scholarly publications
on the Ṛgveda were limited to his *A History of Ancient Sanskrit
Literature* (1859), an article entitled, ''The Hymns of the
Gaupāyanas and the Legend of King Asmāti'' (1866), and a partial
translation (twelve hymns) of the Ṛgveda (1869), reprinted in 1891,
along with thirty-two other hymns apparently translated by Her-
mann Oldenberg, as volume 32 in the Sacred Books of the East
Series).[10] Moreover, this latter work, despite Müller's expertise on
the Sanskrit text of the Ṛgveda, was severely criticized by W. D.
Whitney for its ''tame and spiritless'' translations, for the

"heedless lavishness, in matter, style, and mode of printing" of its notes, and for its lengthy preface (152 pages), "greatly wanting in pertinence":

> "On the whole, we hardly know a volume of which the make-up is more unfortunate and ill-judged, more calculated to baffle the reasonable hopes of him who resorts to it, than the first volume of Max Müller's so-called 'translation' of the Rig-Veda: if the obligation of its title be at all insisted on, at least three quarters of its contents are to be condemned as 'padding'."[11]

Müller's translation of the Ṛgveda, which filled an entire volume, represented only slightly more than one percent of the entire text (i.e., twelve hymns of a text that contains more than a thousand hymns); though his publishers advertised a projected eight volume set, a second volume never did appear. Nonetheless, no other scholar came to be associated so closely with the Ṛgveda, and Müller's work conferred on him—even in the eyes of the general public[12]—a special status. With his singular knowledge he could judge what was worthy and what was worthless in the Veda: though he did not hesitate to register his scepticism (an attitude that undoubtedly pleased his Anglo-Saxon public) regarding the Ṛgveda's "intrinsic merit," he would yet declare that "hidden in this rubbish there are precious stones."[13] By feeding (I am tempted to say, by creating—as he dampened and whetted) the public's hunger for the "first quivering rays of human thought and human faith, as revealed in those ancient documents,"[14] Max Müller fueled the establishment of Vedic studies as an academic discipline in England.[15]

If Max Müller's work represents the starting point of Vedic studies in the second half of the nineteenth century, then A. B. Keith's last published study on the Veda, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, represents its culmination. Though completed in 1916 and published in 1925 (a delay due to the war) in the Harvard Oriental Series, it is a work that belongs really to the nineteenth century. Jarl Charpentier stressed this point when, in his review of Keith's work, he observed: "No one could reasonably accuse Professor Keith of being a heretic in matters connected with Vedic religion and mythology, if the orthodox view is still the one

which was held already in the middle of the last century.''[16] Yet,
despite the suggestion here that Keith's work was already
anachronistic at the time of its publication, the scope of the work
led Charpentier to predict that ''this book will always remain as a
standard reference on a great number of subjects.''[17] The fulfill-
ment of this prediction was ensured, if for no other reason, by the
changes in the direction of Indology in the twentieth century, as the
previous century's singular focus on the Veda gave way to the study
of the whole of India's traditions.[18] With this wider vision of India's
traditions has come the recognition that ''Vedic'' or ''Purāṇic'' or
even ''tribal'' are not separable entities, but rather, are akin to
strands that converge and diverge, historically and geographically;
a model which precludes a reconstruction of Vedic thought and
practice, as Keith and many of his predecessors saw it, into clearly
distinguishable traditions centered on notions of what was early
(the supposed Aryan religion of the Ṛgveda) and late (the
Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, influenced by the non-Aryan
indigenes).[19] Although its value may now derive more from what
it reflects about nineteenth century Indology, than what it says
about Vedic thought itself, Keith's *The Religion and Philosophy of the
Veda and Upanishads* nonetheless created a certain enduring image
of Vedic thought and practice.[20]

  Müller and Keith are also exemplars of what is perhaps the most
curious feature of Indology in the latter half of the nineteenth cen-
tury; that is, its arisal through the marriage of British and German
scholarship. This alliance was born of necessity, not convenience;
for, despite (or, perhaps *because of*) Britain's interest in India, by the
middle of the nineteenth century the most diligent Sanskritists were
to be found in the German universities.[21]

  German Indology began as an adjunct to the Romantic move-
ment and grew, by the middle of the nineteenth century, into a
science of language. Throughout this period few German
Indologists allowed themselves to indulge in India's own distrac-
tions. If, as Schopenhauer noted, Indian sculpture appeared to be
''tasteless and monstrous'' (a characterization that Schopenhauer
extended to Sanskrit poetry),[22] German scholars simply ignored it
in favor of a select group of Sanskrit religious and philosophical
works. And, in fact, as German Indology moved away from its

beginnings in Romanticism, German Indologists increasingly isolated themselves from the "living" Indian tradition; accordingly, Rudolph von Roth disparaged native commentaries on the Ṛgveda, noting that a "conscientious European interpreter may understand the Veda far better," being in a position "to search out the sense which the poets themselves have put into their hymns and utterances."[23]

British Orientalism, though best known for its utilitarianism,[24] was tinged from its late eighteenth century beginnings with a certain air of romanticism. Thus, within a twelve year span, Warren Hastings commissioned *A Code of Gentoo Laws*, "to provide... a clear and undisputed corpus of law" in the administration of civil justice in Bengal,[25] and then sensitively described, in a prefatory note to Charles Wilkins' *The Bhagvat-Geeta*, "the sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction" that placed the teachings of the Bhagavad-gītā, "among all the known religions of mankind," on a par with Christianity.[26] Decades later, British "romanticism" seemed to reach a new height when H. H. Wilson, the successor to the first generation of British Orientalists, and the scholar who established the study of Sanskrit as an academic discipline in England, expressed the hope that his translation of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, "will be of service and of interest to the few, who in these times of utilitarian selfishness...can find a restingplace (*sic*) for their thoughts in the tranquil contemplation of those yet living pictures of the ancient world which are exhibited by the literature and mythology of the Hindus."[27] Yet, at this time British Sanskrit studies, exemplified by the two early centers of learning, Haileybury College in England and the College of Fort William in India, which served primarily as training grounds for civil servants,[28] seemed overwhelmingly utilitarian in its orientation.

When, following the lead of France and Germany, chairs for the study of Sanskrit as a "pure science" were established at British universities, Britain was forced to look to the continent.[29] The British, however, were begrudging in recognizing the significance of continental scholarship, a point underscored by the history of the Boden professorship, Britain's first academic chair in Sanskrit. In 1860, Monier Williams, a professor at Haileybury, was chosen over F. Max Müller—by most accounts (including Müller's own!) the

leading Sanskritist in England—to succeed the first Boden professor, H. H. Wilson. The appointment fell to Monier Williams after a heated campaign that contrasted, among other points, Monier William's knowledge of classical Sanskrit, which he claimed "really lived and breathed in the current speech of the [Indian] people," with Max Müller's knowledge of Vedic Sanskrit, said to be unpalatable to the practical tastes of Englishmen.[30] (Müller, who had already done so much to strengthen British Sanskrit studies, however, was not forgotten by Oxford; in 1868 he was appointed to a new chair of Comparative Philology, the first professorship established by the university itself—that is, with neither royal nor private endowments.)[31]

Müller's predilection for Vedic Sanskrit reflects the general direction of German scholarship in the second half of the nineteenth century. As this period began the German scholars Rudolph von Roth, Albrecht Weber, Theodor Benfey, and Theodor Aufrecht produced critical Sanskrit editions of the four Vedic saṃhitā texts; it continued with the production by Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolph von Roth of the massive Sanskrit-German Lexicon. In England the first three Boden professors, H. H. Wilson, Monier Monier-Williams, and A. A. Macdonell, successively produced Sanskrit-English dictionaries.[32] Monier-Williams distinguished the lexicographical efforts of the Boden professors from the work of the German scholars by calling attention to the terms of Colonel Boden's will (of 1811) "that the special object of his munificent bequest was to promote the translation of the Scriptures into Sanskrit," and, making an obvious reference to the work of his German contemporaries, not "editing or translating obscure Sanskrit texts which have never been edited or translated before."[33] Moreover, unlike many of their German contemporaries, the first Boden Professors were well acquainted with the Indian subcontinent: Wilson served twenty-five years in a number of civil service positions there; Monier-Williams and Macdonell were born in India, and both visited several times during their terms as Boden Professor. Monier Williams saw these visits to India as a proof of scholarship: "At all events let any one who claims a reputation for superior scholarship...associate with Indian Pandits in their own country and he will find out that far severer proofs of his knowledge and acquirements will be required of him there."[34]

Max Müller, who began his Sanskrit studies in his native Germany, but spent his entire academic career at Oxford, never faced these "severer proofs of his knowledge." The failure to visit India proved discomforting[35] to this scholar who had thoroughly committed himself to England and English ways.[36] This discomfort, or, to appropriate a term Müller employed, though in a different sense, *disease* with the culture of British Indological scholarship is sharpened by the subject matter itself, India. Reflective of this disease was Müller's peculiar combination of awe and revulsion in his attitude to India. Thus, the real enthusiasm Müller expressed when "Dr. Haug succeeded...at last in procuring a real [Brahmin] Doctor of Divinity, who...had officiated at some of the great Soma sacrifices, now very rarely to be seen in any part of India," was tempered by disapproval for the inducement, or, as Max Müller himself remarked, "we are very sorry to say by very mercenary considerations," that led to the performance of these ceremonies.[37]

If these alternating phases of awe and revulsion are the symptoms of the disease of Indology, then the underlying cause is appropriation, born of Müller's dictum that the religions of antiquity "can never be judged from without, they must be judged from within."[38] Yet, how could Müller and his contemporaries enter fully into traditions that contained elements—the salacious content of certain texts,[39] the crass materialism of the priests— repugnant to their own values and sensibilities? In his preface to the Sacred Books of the East Series, Max Müller made a remark that, with its odd tentative tone, articulated this conflict: "We need not become Brahmans or Buddhist or Taosze *altogether*, but we must for a time, if we wish to understand, and still more if we are bold enough to undertake to translate their doctrines" (italics added).[40] Through this process of becoming a Brahmin, not "altogether, but...for a time," Müller perhaps sought to gain a measure of possession, and thus the freedom to wrest the ancient traditions from the "heaps of rubbish" in which they were interred; the remnant, then, was "pure gold," for its condition was already determined by Müller's own sensibilities.[41]

What became of the Vedic texts in the hands of Müller and Keith and those scholars who stood between them resulted from this "disease" of Indology; that is, uncomfortable with certain aspects

of India itself, these scholars first needed to extricate the Veda from
its context before it could be "judged from within."

F. Max Müller

The details of Max Müller's life, disseminated through his own
autobiographical fragments, his wife's biography, and Chaudhuri's
recent biography, are well known. For the purposes of this study,
the most significant event in Max Müller's career was his project
of editing the Ṛgveda.[42] On the one hand, this project established
Müller's position—largely undeserved—as the doyen of nineteenth
century Indologists; on the other hand, it contributed to his later
failure (also, undeserved) to win the Boden professorship at
Oxford. Moreover, his work on the Ṛgveda left Müller, who began
his Sanskrit studies with Brockhaus at Leipzig (where Müller
earned his doctorate at the age of nineteen), and, as many German
Sanskritists did, continued his studies with Burnouf in Paris,
physically isolated from his German colleagues. These cir-
cumstances may underlie Müller's controversial decision to include
the whole of Sāyaṇa's Ṛgveda commentary in his *editio princeps*; for,
at this time, native commentaries were disparaged by the most
influential German Indologists, but embraced by certain British
scholars. During the twenty-five years Müller worked on the
Ṛgveda this decision remained a controversial one; in the prefaces
to each of the Ṛgveda's six volumes, Müller continually referred to
this issue, seeking to defend himself from an ever-widening circle
of critics.[43]

Precisely how Max Müller, and not some other scholar, acquired
the "rights" to this project is not clear. An edition of the Ṛgveda
was begun by Friedrich Rosen, also German, and also working in
England, in the 1830's. Rosen's untimely death at the age of 32
brought the work, completed with a partial Latin translation
through the first aṣṭaka (one-eight of the text), to a halt. Müller
apparently formed the idea of taking up Rosen's work while he was
Burnouf's student, in Paris, in 1845.[44] By 1847 Müller had already
procured the East India Company's patronage, both for his own
support and to defray the costs of publishing, and immediately
began to produce printed sheets. Completed volumes appeared
slowly, in 1849, '53, '56, '62, '72, and '74, leading Whitney in

1861 to complain: ''much too slowly for the impatience of those who are to make use of it, and who are ready to quarrel with Max Müller over every hour which he steals, for the benefit of a larger public, from hurrying to its completion the task specially committed to his charge.''[45] In fact, there is some evidence suggesting that Müller, after producing the first two volumes (which secured his reputation), lost interest in the project, and turned it over to his assistants.[46] Although at this point in his career he turned to other studies, he continued to lecture and write about the Ṛgveda, though often in a decidedly popular vein (hence Whitney's caustic remark).[47]

While Max Müller worked on the Ṛgveda his contemporaries in Germany produced editions of the other Vedic saṃhitās: the Sāmaveda (Benfey, 1848);[48] the Yajurveda (Weber, 1852); and the Atharvaveda (Whitney and Roth, 1856). Of this group Roth was perhaps the brightest star. Older than Max Müller, he also studied with Burnouf in Paris, and produced in 1846 the first important study (since Colebrooke's) on the Vedic literature, *Zur Litteratur und Geschichte des Weda*. How Max Müller (the youngest of Burnouf's students)[49] and not Roth became Rosen's successor is not clear; Müller himself observed that because the manuscripts were dispersed in London, Oxford, and Paris, and because the cost of publishing such a work was prohibitive, ''although there were many qualified for such a work, yet no one has been found to undertake it.''[50] Though in 1849 Müller indicated his work advanced slowly, ''being left entirely to my own resources,''[51] many years later, he described how he had rejected an offer of assistance from Roth, made in 1845 (apparently when Müller was still in Paris, studying with Burnouf), being ''then very youthful and bold.''[52] The decision to embark alone on the project bespeaks of how this young scholar envisioned the making of his own reputation; in later years he never tired of impressing upon his audience the great personal sacrifice his work on the Ṛgveda entailed.[53]

Yet, before the last volumes of Max Müller's Ṛgveda appeared, W. D. Whitney, who was among Max Müller's harshest critics,[54] observed that ''a few months would have been amply sufficient for laying before the world the whole text.''[55] Müller himself admitted that ''The MSS. of the Rig-veda have generally been written and

corrected by the Brahmins with so much care that there are no vari-
ous readings in the proper sense of the word...''[56] In part, the task
was extended to a near interminable length by Max Müller's many
obligations, as he noted in the preface to the fourth volume (thir-
teen years after he began): ''Had I been allowed to devote...at least
one half of my time to the study of Sanskrit and the carrying on of
my edition of the Rig-veda, the present volume would have been
published long ago.''[57] (Two more volumes and ten years later he
observed: ''Life is meant for more, at least I think so, than the mere
drudgery of collating MSS. and correcting proof sheets...'')[58] The
project was also slowed by Müller's decision, at its inception, to
include the whole of Sāyaṇa's commentary on the Ṛgveda. This
decision meant that Müller had to consult the numerous works—
Brāhmaṇas, Śrauta and Gṛhya Sūtras, Yāska's Nirukta, Pāṇini's
Grammar, and so forth—Sāyaṇa cites, for the most part available
only in manuscript form.[59] (Müller claimed he ''had first to copy
and collate many works...cited by Sāyaṇa'';[60] curiously, though,
he neither published nor produced monographs of these works).
Furthermore, the manuscripts of Sāyaṇa's commentary were
''nearly the worst to be met with in Sanskrit libraries,''[61] a situation
that worsened as Müller progressed to the final books, ''so much
so that a scholar who was best acquainted with the MSS...declared
that a critical restitution of the last books of Sāyaṇa would be
altogether impossible.''[62] Yet, Max Müller held tenaciously to his
original plan to publish the whole commentary, spurred on perhaps
when, in 1861, his chief assistant, Theodor Aufrecht, produced a
complete edition (without commentary) of the Ṛgveda;[63] as
Whitney remarked with an obvious note of glee: ''and now it is
Aufrecht who is the true editor of the Veda, while Max Müller has
to content himself with the secondary honor of being the editor of
Sāyaṇa.''[64] (Many years later, Max Müller observed: ''[Auf-
recht's] friends, who were perhaps not mine, seemed delighted to
call him the first editor of the Rig-veda, though they ceased to do
so when they discovered misprints or mistakes of my own edition
repeated in his...[but] whatever the *vulgus profanum* may think, my
real work was the critical edition of Sāyaṇa's commentary on the
Ṛgveda'').[65]

Max Müller always attributed his decision to edit the whole of

Sāyaṇa to the "strongest remonstrances from Burnouf."[66] Yet, Burnouf's remonstrances did not have the same effect on his other students; for example, Albrecht Weber's edition of the Yajurveda included only extracts from Sāyaṇa's commentary. Müller's decision regarding Sāyaṇa, however, may also have been influenced by H. H. Wilson, whose intervention led the East India Company to support Müller's work and to underwrite the publishing costs.[67] When Max Müller first arrived in England, Wilson—whose assistance he immediately sought—was engaged in translating the entire text of the Ṛgveda (1850-88, completed after Wilson's death by E. B. Cowell and others) by relying wholly on Sāyaṇa's commentary, a commentary composed in the 14th century A.D. (i.e., more than two thousand years after the composition of the Ṛgveda).[68] It was Wilson's belief that Sāyaṇa "must have been in possession of all the interpretations which had been perpetrated by traditional teaching from the earliest times."[69] Moreover, Wilson was contemptuous of scholars who sought to interpret the obscure language of the Veda through philological methods, as Wilson stated: "such a mode of interpretation by European scholars, whose ordinary train of thinking runs in a very different channel from that of Indian scholarship, can scarcely claim equal authority with the latter."[70] Wilson's remarks were clearly intended as an attack on the continental philologists, such as Roth, who had boldly asserted that "a conscientious European interpreter may understand the Veda far better and more correctly than Sāyaṇa."[71]

Roth's method was to seek meaning within the text of the Ṛgveda itself, "to follow the path prescribed by philology, to derive from the texts themselves the sense which they contain, by a juxtaposition of all the passages which are cognate in diction or contents."[72] Wilson, however, objected: "It has been supposed that a careful collation of all the passages in which such words occur might lead to a consistent and indisputable interpretation, but this assumes that they have always been employed with precision and uniformity by the original authors, a conclusion that would scarcely be tenable even if the author were one individual, and utterly untenable, when, as is the case with the Sūktas, the authors are indefinitely numerous."[73]

Despite Wilson's well-reasoned argument, scholars quickly

discredited Wilson's reliance on Sāyaṇa's commentary. In 1866, the British Sanskritist J. Muir exposed several instances in which Sāyaṇa "expounds numerous words differently in different places (without...any justification of this variation in sense being in general discoverable in the context),"[74] and then went on to conclude, "there is probably little information of value derived from Sāyaṇa which we might not, with our knowledge of modern Sanskrit...and our various philological appliances, have sooner or later found out for ourselves."[75] Even E. B. Cowell, who first promoted the use of Sāyaṇa's commentary (and disparaged "the arbitrary guesses which are often indulged in by continental scholars"),[76] declared, in the preface to the last volume of Wilson's Ṛgveda translation, "[Sāyaṇa's] explanations must not for a moment bar the progress of scholarship...let us not forget the debt which we owe to modern scholars, especially to those of Germany".[77]

In 1856, in the preface to the thirs volume of his Ṛgveda, Max Müller seemed deaf to the entire controversy when he remarked: "But it has been a still greater pleasure to me, while engaged for so many years in preparing a critical edition of the text of the Rigveda, but also of its commentary by Sāyaṇa Āchārya, to observe how the conviction seems to be growing more and more general, that without his commentary an accurate and scholarlike knowledge of the Veda could never have been obtained."[78] What appears to be naiveté here may simply represent Max Müller's effort to please H. H. Wilson, whose support had secured for Max Müller the patronage of the East-India Company, and whose chair, the Boden professorship, Max Müller later sought to occupy. Yet, Müller clearly recognized that few scholars supported Wilson's position, and so too that the enormous editorial task Müller had assumed was perceived by his colleagues to be an endeavor of questionable value.[79] For, in this same preface (in the next paragraph), Müller went on to note that Sāyaṇa should not be considered an "infallible authority with regard to the interpretation of the Veda," as he observed that "Sāyaṇa gives the *traditional*, but not the *original* sense of the Vaidic hymns" (italics added).[80] According to Müller, the distinction between the "original" and the "traditional" sense of the hymns arose from a process of corruption: "the gradual corruption of simple truth [the original sense] into hierarchical

dogmatism and hallucination [the traditional sense]."[81] Following this line of reasoning Müller, over the years, was able to reconstruct his view of Sāyaṇa so that it both discredited Sāyaṇa and confirmed the importance of producing a critical edition of Sāyaṇa's commentary; in 1869, he thus remarked: "I never entertained any exaggerated opinion as to the value of the traditional interpretation of Sāyaṇa...Sāyaṇa in many cases teaches us how the Veda ought not to be, rather than how it ought to be understood."[82]

Müller's notion of the "traditional" and the "original" sense of the Vedic hymns was reminiscent of the views expressed by Roth (and so quickly earned, for Müller, Professor Wilson's disapproval).[83] In 1855, Roth had asserted that the Ṛgvedic hymns "are not the creations of theological speculation, nor have they sprung out of the soil of that rigidly prescribed, minute, liturgical ceremonial...but they are for the most part productions of the oldest religous-lyrical poetry."[84] According to Roth's student and collaborator, W. D. Whitney, the early Vedic religion, then, was "not one which has been nursed into its present form by the fostering care of a caste or priesthood; it is one which has arisen in the whole body of the people."[85] Yet, this "free Vedic state" (as Whitney called it) was short lived; in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, part of the textual tradition that followed the Ṛgveda, the priests were already audaciously referring to themselves as "gods amongst man," and exhorting their patrons to "give more fees, according to [the depth of] their faith" as the only path to success in the sacrifice.[86] This sort of priestly conceit led Whitney to declare that "the widest gulf, perhaps, in the history of the Hindu religion and its literature, is between them [the Brāhmaṇa-texts] and the Hymns [of the Ṛgveda]."[87] By positing a continuous priestly tradition, from the ancient Brāhmaṇa texts to the present, the Ṛgveda, as "the true expression of the collective view [of]...a simple-minded, but highly gifted nation,"[88] took on the appearance of an anomaly; though standing at its beginning, the Ṛgveda was separated from the whole of the Hindu tradition. Since the Ṛgveda was not, like the later Hindu religion, a product of the priests, then Roth and Whitney reasoned it must reflect the Indo-European past; as Roth described it, in the Ṛgveda one "finds the high spiritual endowments that belong of right to the Indo-European family of

nations, which have placed it foremost in the world's history."[89]
Accordingly, Whitney observed: "the conditions and manners
depicted in [the Ṛgveda] are...of a character which seems almost
more Indo-European than Indian."[90]

The involvement of the Indo-Europeans in all this was, of course,
a result of the "evidence of language"; as Max Müller himself
expressed it (in language reminiscent of Sir William Jones' well
known declaration of the similarity between Sanskrit, Greek,
Latin, Celtic, Gothic and Persian):

> Though the historian may shake his head, though the physiologist
> may doubt, and the poet scorn the idea, all must yield before the facts
> furnished by language. There *was* a time when the ancestors of the
> Celts, the Germans, the Slavonians, the Greeks, and Italians, the
> Persians, and Hindus, were living together within the same fence,
> separate from the ancestors of the Semitic and Turanian races.[91]

In view of this linguistic connection, Roth's claim that "a conscien-
tious European interpreter may understand the Veda far better and
more correctly than Sāyana,"[92] appears to be, at least in part,
based on the supposition that the European shared a cultural
heritage with the Vedic people, and that this ancient tradition had
been *lost* to the Indians in the post-Ṛgvedic period. Thus, Sāyana's
commentary merely represented the culmination of the loss of the
ancient tradition. Although, of course, Europeans such as Roth
were themselves far removed from the Ṛgvedic tradition, their
vision was not, like that of the Hindus, obfuscated by the myths,
rites, and mumbo-jumbo of an all-powerful priestly caste, but was
clearly focused through their "scientific" understanding of the
Vedic language itself. Understanding the Veda "better and more
correctly" thus seems to be born of the notion that the European
interpreter had open to him, through the science of language, a
channel to this ancient cultural heritage that had long ago been shut
off to the Hindus.

Müller too acknowledged a shared cultural heritage with the
ancient Vedic people, as he declared: "Those men were the true
ancestors of our race; and the Veda is the oldest book we have in
which to study the first beginnings of our language..."[93] Through
reading the Veda the memory of this cultural heritage could be
roused; Müller thus disclosed to a group of British candidates for

the Indian Civil Service that, "in going to the East...everybody who has enjoyed the advantages of a liberal...education, ought to feel that he is going to his 'old home', full of memories, if only he can read them."[94] In the case of the Ṛgveda, these memories could sufficiently guide a modern investigator in understanding the text as its authors originally intended it to be understood: "We must...discover for ourselves the real vestiges of these ancient poets; and if we follow them cautiously we shall find that with some effort we are still able to walk in their footsteps."[95] Yet, while Roth saw in this situation an opportunity to abandon, and further, to condemn Sāyaṇa's "Hindu" interpretation of the Ṛgveda, Müller juxtaposed this notion of self-discovery with the idea that Sāyaṇa's interpretation remained a satisfactory guide to at least three-quarters of the Ṛgveda.[96]

As I have already suggested, the need to affirm the importance of Sāyaṇa's commentary had, for Max Müller, an obvious practical connotation. Müller's reputation, and so too, his future as a Vedicist, was established on his yet unfinished *editio princeps* of the Ṛgveda which, for whatever reasons (Müller insisted it was Burnouf's "remonstrances," I am inclined to believe the practical importance of Wilson's support was the more influential factor here) included the entire commentary. As other scholars turned against Sāyaṇa, Müller, who never paled in the face of criticism,[97] maintained his position, even asserting that Sāyaṇa's commentary in many instances met the "scientific" criteria of nineteenth century textual criticism; that is, "whenever that [Sāyaṇa's] interpretation satisfie[d] both the rules of grammar and the requirements of common sense."[98]

The ambiguity of this statement—for one must ask, whose rules of grammar and whose common sense?—is, I believe, designed to affirm the importance of Sāyaṇa's commentary (and so too the importance of Müller's editorial work) through eviscerating it. For, unlike Roth who simply dismissed Sāyaṇa, by acknowledging that Sāyaṇa's reading of the Ṛgveda could be as correct as that of any European interpreter, Müller established the basis for his own editorial task of presenting a *corrected* version of Sāyaṇa. Accordingly, Müller did not limit himself merely to collating the numerous extant manuscripts of Sāyaṇa's commentary and presenting the

text *as it had been preserved* (a process known to nineteenth century classicists as ''diplomatic'' criticism),[99] but actually *restored* the text to what he believed was its ''original'' condition, the condition that, he declared, ''any body, if acquainted with the rules of the Sanskrit language, would have seen it, and, if conversant with the style of Sāyaṇa, would have safely corrected it.''[100]

But, what precisely constituted the original condition of the commentary? As I noted above, Müller drew a distinction between the ''original'' sense of the hymns and the nature of Sāyaṇa's text as a ''traditional'' rendition of the meaning of the hymns. According to Müller the transformation from the original to Sāyaṇa's traditional interpretation occurred as part of a historical process, as ''no religion, no law, no language, can resist the wear and tear of thirty centuries,''[101] whereby the original meaning was forgotten and then recreated in a degenerate form, a process made famous by Müller's colorful phrase, the ''disease of language.''[102] This disease of language became an epidemic in the Brāhmaṇas, the texts which, in the Vedic tradition follow chronologically the Ṛgvedic hymns. To exemplify this process, Müller repeatedly cited the transformation of the interrogative ''who,'' from its appearance as a pronoun in the Ṛgveda, into a god in the Brāhmaṇas: ''When the ancient Rishi [in the Ṛgveda] exclaims with a troubled heart, 'Who is the greatest of the gods? Who shall first be praised by our songs?'—the author of the Brāhmaṇa sees in the interrogative pronoun 'Who' some divine name, a place is allotted in the sacrificial invocations to a god 'Who', and hymns addressed to him are called 'Whoish' hymns.''[103]

That Müller perceived such ''misunderstandings'' to be a disease, rather than a reinvigoration—an adding of new meaning as a way of maintaining the health of a tradition that was becoming obsolete—reflects his idealization of the ancient Aryans,[104] on the one hand, and his disdain for ''priestcraft,'' on the other hand.[105] For, in Müller's view, this transformation occurred ''when the sacrifices fell into the hands of priests...and certain acts made the monopoly of certain priests.''[106] In the hands of the priests— ''blinded by [their] theology''[107]—the ancient Vedic religion (which Müller generally extolled as ''spontaneous, original, and truthful'')[108] became ''misunderstood, perverted, and absurd'';[109]

it was, in Müller's view "a most important phase in the growth of the human mind, in its passage from health to disease."[110] In perhaps his most famous description of the Brāhmaṇas, Müller thus declared that these texts contained nothing more than "twaddle, and what is worse, theological twaddle."[111]

With this view of the Brāhmaṇas, Müller effectively committed to the insane asylum an entire epoch in the history of the Vedic tradition. (Müller himself suggested the analogy between the Brāhmaṇas and mental illness: "These works deserve to be studied as the physician studies the twaddle of idiots, and the raving of madmen.")[112] However, unlike Rudolph von Roth, who turned his disdain for the Brāhmaṇas into a condemnation of Sāyaṇa's commentary—seeing them as one unbroken priestly tradition— Müller used his viriation of these texts as a means for resuscitating Sāyaṇa. For, insofar as Sāyaṇa's commentary did *not* follow the Brāhmaṇas, it represented a credible guide to the original meaning of the hymns; as Müller observed, "where Sāyaṇa has no authority to mislead him, his commentary is at all events rational."[113] To determine when Sāyaṇa was not following the Brāhmaṇas, Müller appealed to his notion of the Ṛgveda's native simplicity: accord- ingly, Müller asserted, since "the greater part of [the Vedic] hymns is so simple and straightforward...there can be no doubt that their original meaning was exactly the same as their traditional inter- pretation [by Sāyaṇa]."[114]

This reasoning suggests Müller, in editing Sāyaṇa's commen- tary, assumed responsibility for determining when Sāyaṇa held to, or, fell from, the standard of the "spontaneous, original, and truthful" nature of the Vedic hymns. Müller's work as editor seems especially pernicious in light of his comments that he did not limit himself to "diplomatic criticism" (i.e., restoring the text as the majority of the manuscript preserved it), but actually corrected the text in those instances when "none of the readings of the MSS. would have yielded any sense whatsoever";[115] his complaints regarding the corrupt state of the manuscripts of Sāyaṇa's com- mentary; and his claim that he consulted the originals which Sāyaṇa quoted (the numerous unpublished Brāhmaṇas, Śrauta Sūtras, etc.) before "correcting" the text of the commentary.[116] Did Müller consult these works to show that Sāyaṇa's interpreta-

tion, though it may have correctly cited a Brāhmaṇic authority, was then inherently incorrect for following the Brāhmaṇas? Did he maintain or restore quotations from these texts when they were incomplete in the damaged manuscripts of Sāyaṇa's commentary, or did he delete them as "twaddle"? When Müller wrote that the manuscripts of the commentaries were "written by men who did not understand what they were writing, and the numbers of mistakes is at first sight quite discouraging,"[117] was he referring to mistakes that arose from failing to understand the Ṛgveda, or because they understood the Brāhmaṇas, and so misunderstood the original import of the Ṛgveda?

The curious ambivalence Müller exhibited toward Sāyaṇa's commentary was reflective of Müller's approach to India in general. Like his German colleagues, Müller idealized ancient India, believing that the "Aryans of India" were "our nearest intellectual relatives...the fellow-workers in the construction of our fundamental concepts, the fathers of the most natural of natural religions."[118] However, perhaps because Müller spent his entire academic career in England, where contact with India was commonplace (the remarks quoted above were delivered before candidates for the Indian Civil Service), or perhaps because he realized the absurdity of the supposition that the legacy of the ancient Aryans persisted in Europe, but had disappeared in the subcontinent where it saw its greatest development, Müller did not develop the same aversion to modern India that his colleagues did. Although Müller never visited India, and as I have shown above, disparaged its priestly traditions and its "licentiousness,"[119] he nonetheless could accept India *on his own terms*; near the end of his life, Müller thus wrote: "I have often been told that I...have taken too favorable a view of the Indian character...But where is the harm? I have seen what the Indian character can be, I have learnt what it ought to be, and I hope what it will be..."[120]

Müller's revision of the Indian character was, of course, no more realistic than his view of Sāyaṇa's commentary. For, Müller extended his acceptance of Sāyaṇa's commentary only to the elements he perceived to be genuinely Vedic; that is, untouched by what he perceived to be the post-Vedic "disease" visible in the character of Hindu thought, language, and mythology. Despite his

long and acrimonious disputes with his colleagues over Sāyaṇa's commentary, Müller valued the commentary precisely for the reasons his colleagues valued the Veda itself; namely, that Sāyaṇa's commentary, when it held (or, more precisely, when Müller forced it to hold) to the standard of the "spontaneous, original, and truthful" nature of the Vedic hymns, could be read, like the Veda itself, as an entity at once self-contained and separable from the later Hindu tradition. As such, the commentary, like the Veda itself, became a reflection of a supposed Aryan past; a past that Müller and his colleagues claimed as their own inheritance, for the Hindus, with their "manifold excrescences,"[121] had squandered it.

A. B. Keith

A. B. Keith was the scion of the greatest Indologists of the nineteenth century, and his academic "pedigree" shows clearly Max Müller's influence on the course of British Indology during this period. The line between Max Müller and A. B. Keith is seen primarily through Keith's association with Julius Eggeling, one of the German Sanskritists who assisted Max Müller in his work on the Ṛgveda. Eggeling began his Sanskrit studies with Albrecht Weber, one of the great German Indologists whose philological bent left him at odds with Max Müller's project of editing Sāyaṇa's Ṛgveda commentary.[122] In England, Eggeling came under Max Müller's tutelage (he was Max Müller's assistant at Oxford from 1897-89), and with his support he translated the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (1882-1900) for Max Müller's Sacred Books of the East Series.[123]

Keith studied with Eggeling at Edinburgh University (later inheriting his chair when Eggeling retired in 1914), where he graduated with first class honors in classics. Following his graduation, Keith studied at Oxford, where he was awarded a Boden Sanskrit scholarship, and placed in the first class in classical moderations, the school of oriental languages, and literae humaniores. Here Keith joined the line of the British Indologists through his association with A. A. Macdonell, Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, with whom Keith studied Sanskrit and later collaborated on the *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*. Macdonell, who wrote extensively on Vedic language and literature (producing, in particular,

several grammars and an encyclopaedic guide to Vedic mythology)
was the third Boden professor.[124] (Macdonell's own career reflects
the thorough mixing of British and German Indology that had
occurred by the end of the nineteenth century: Macdonell, though
British, matriculated at the University of Göttingen, studied San-
skrit with Benfey, then moved to Oxford where he studied with
Müller. He later completed his Ph.D. under Roth's direction at
Leipzig.)

Keith's prodigious record of publications in Vedic studies, rang-
ing from catalogues of manuscripts to critical editions, translations,
and interpretations, alone attests to his ample scholarly abilities.
That the bulk of these studies were completed while Keith was
employed as a civil servant in the Colonial Office makes this record
even more remarkable. (In 1901 Keith not only outdistanced all his
competitors in the Home and Indian Civil Service examination,
but was reported to have outdistanced any previous candidate by
over a thousand marks. In 1904 he was called to the bar, again with
first class honors in the examination.)[125] In fact, Keith's last pub-
lished study of the Veda, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and
Upanishads*, was completed only two years after he became Professor
of Sanskrit at Edinburgh University (the chair which Eggeling had
held for the previous thirty-nine years). The numerous works pub-
lished by Keith during this period led Jarl Charpentier to observe
dryly: "It may soon be said of Professor Keith, as of a famous
author in times long gone by, that he has written much more than
the average man ever reads."[126] Keith went on to publish
numerous studies in classical Sanskrit, including treatises on philos-
ophy, drama, literature, and mythology. During this period Keith
also produced numerous works on British constitutional law;
perhaps few modern Indologists, though well acquainted with his
Vedic and Sanskrit studies, realize Keith was for the last thirty
years of his life Great Britain's leading authority on constitutional
law.[127]

In the context of this study, Keith's view of the Brāhmaṇa texts
bears a special significance. Although Keith heartily agreed with his
predecessors that the Brāhmaṇas "abound in their explanations of
rites with all sorts of absurdities," he also attributed a measure of
guile to the authors as he asserted that, "we need not accuse the

priests of being so foolish as not to recognize [their own explanations] as absurdities.''[128] Unlike Müller, Keith thus questioned the integrity of the authors of the Brāhmaṇas. In other words, in Müller's view, the ignoble expression that characterized the Brāhmaṇas was simply a reflection of the limited means of the ancient authors; if, as Max Müller stated, the texts should be compared to the "raving of madmen," then the authors were mad and could not be expected to express themselves in anything more sensible than "twaddle." Keith, however, took the additional step of questioning the sincerity of the priestly authors, or, redactors, of the Brāhmaṇas: "the question constantly obtrudes itself to what extent we can believe that the priests by whom these texts were composed and handed down held the views which they wrote down.''[129] According to Keith, there was a very simple motive for this hieratic guile: "In truth the aims of the Brahmans were bent on things which are not ethical at all, immediate profit...''[130]

One particular target of Keith's disdain is the myth told in the Brāhmaṇas of Prajāpati's creation of the cosmos. Keith baldly stated of this entire corpus: "The details of these stupid myths are wholly unimportant...''[131] (Clearly, Keith believed that these myths had no redeeming features whatsoever; yet, the idea that it is a stupid myth because its details lack importance does suggest the sort of tautological reasoning that is typical of the Brāhmaṇas, and one to which Keith and his colleagues seem to have been especially averse.) The one feature of this Brāhmaṇic myth which Keith depicted in a positive light was the implication of a connection between it and the Ṛgveda; as Keith noted: "the conception of him is purely intellectual, that of the unity of the universe, the choosing of Prajāpati [in the mythology of the Brāhmaṇas] as the symbol of this unity is one of the most striking proofs of the great influence of the Rigveda upon the period of the Brāhmaṇas.''[132] This sort of statement suggests why Keith did not attribute any importance to the Brāhmaṇa's Prajāpati myth: rather than look to the Brāhmaṇas themselves, texts which for Keith and other Indologists were worthless fabrications, to gauge the significance of this myth, Keith turned to the Ṛgveda—the text which nineteenth century (and, in particular, German) Indologists, in their search for the earliest religious imaginings of the Aryan people, held in the

highest esteem, and sought to establish as their own. Of course, the
failure to view the myth within its own context, that of the
Brāhmaṇa texts, dooms ineluctably the possibility of understanding
the myth.[133]

The question that arises from all this, is why Keith returned to
the "brahmin-bashing" attitude of his predecessors, an attitude
that Müller, with his peculiar theories, had deftly avoided. By the
end of the nineteenth century nearly all the Vedic texts had been
edited and translated (Keith himself translated the Aitareya and
Kauśītaki Brāhmaṇas, the Taittirīya-saṃhitā, and edited and
translated several Āraṇyakas); Keith's *The Religion and Philosophy of
the Veda and Upanishads* marked the end of a concerted effort to
elucidate the contents of these texts. Perhaps the romanticism that
impelled much of this scholarship had eroded; in his magnum opus,
The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads (Keith excluded
the term "Brāhmaṇas" in the title of this work), Keith's
enthusiasm even for the Ṛgveda and the Upaniṣads is at times
muted.

There is another explanation for Keith's utter disregard for the
Brāhmaṇas, as well as for his scepticism regarding the other Vedic
texts. By the end of this period the Vedic texts were no longer a
mystery—certainly, the "big game of the hunt" had been cap-
tured, catalogued, and thoroughly appropriated. The Veda had
now become the property of a group of German-British scholars, no
longer perplexed (as Max Müller had been) by the question of
native exegesis, and A. B. Keith, the inheritor to this group, could
fully vent his disdain for those aspects of India which he did not feel
at ease.

Conclusion

The enduring legacy of F. Max Müller and A. B. Keith is a set
of texts: for the specialist, Müller's Ṛgveda, and Keith's Brāhmaṇa
and Āraṇyaka translations, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, and *The
Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, remain as standard
works, and for generalists, Müller's Sacred Books of the East Series
remains as the single comprehensive collection of texts, in English
translation, from the ancient Orient. The peculiar views held by
these scholars are deeply buried within this legacy; their distance

allows scholars today either to ignore them, or, when they do
dredge them up, to treat them with at least mild derision.[134]
Accordingly, the "disease" of late nineteenth century Indology,
born of the desire to take something of India, and sorely com-
pounded by the merging of the two schools of German and British
Indology, seems to persist today only vaguely as a nagging
inheritance.

For those who have inherited the Orientalist tradition, the recent
scrutinization of Orientalism has been an admission of continued
guilt and an attempt to gain absolution. As Ronald Inden has sug-
gested, Indologists might look to the subcontinent as one means of
breaking with their Orientalist past; for, as he has observed:
"Indians are, for perhaps the first time since colonization, showing
sustained signs of reappropriating the capacity to represent them-
selves."[135] Western Vedicists may be struck by the religious
paradox here; for, unlike other aspects of the Indian tradition, the
Veda is subject to a prohibition against exposing it outside the pale
of the orthodox Hindu community. And this, after all, may also be
seen as one of the continuing legacies of late nineteenth century
Indology: as Western scholars, who, following Max Müller, having
become "Brahmans" not "altogether but...for a time," have come
to perceive themselves as mediators for those who, in their estima-
tion, are (or should be) bound by the conventions of the Hindu
tradition—a tradition that, it is supposed, denies them the ability
to represent themselves to anyone (e.g., the West) but themselves.

Yet, this view itself reflects a fallacy that extends back to the
beginnings of Orientalism, and was then firmly established in the
work of Müller, Keith, and their contemporaries; namely, that
within the whole of the Indian tradition the Veda exists as a self-
contained, and, thus, separable entity. Moreover, this Veda, as
Indologists have interpreted it, seems only to point backwards to an
Indo-European past and not forward to the Hindu context in which
it came to stand as the substratum of a tradition of enormous com-
plexity.[136] The mixing of "non-Vedic," or, "Hindu" rituals
(viewing the diety, making a donation, etc.) with the Vedic rites
was made apparent in the recent performance in India of an
agnicayana rite;[137] as Brian Smith has pointed out, when scholars
witnessed this: "The experts winced in embarrassment at the sad

naiveté of Hindus who in this way so blatantly manifested their
misperception of the 'true meaning' of the Vedic sacrifice.''[138]
Throughout its history, Hinduism has been characterized by its
overwhelming tendency to syncretize; could the Veda, even from
the moment the Aryans set foot in the subcontinent, ever have been
wholly set apart from all other beliefs and rituals? In the final
analysis, the degree to which the principles of Orientalism con-
tinues to inform Indology today can be measured by the continued
existence of this fictional ''Veda''; though unlike Müller and his
contemporaries, Western Indologists perhaps no longer claim the
Veda as their ''own'' heritage, its representation as a distinct entity
furthers a process of scholarly appropriation first begun nearly two
centuries ago.

HERMAN TULL

Department of Religion
Douglass College, Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ 08903-0270

[1] F. Max Müller, trans. *The Upanishads*, part 1, The Sacred Books of the East,
vol. I (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1879), x.

[2] Edward Said's work, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), is the
ostensible source for much of this interest. A number of important works specific
to Indology appeared prior to Said's book: Peter Marshall, ed., *The British
Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1970); David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (Berkeley:
University of California Press, 1969); and the more general work by Raymond
Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking
(New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), first published in French in 1950.
Among recent contributions are Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe* (Albany:
SUNY Press, 1988), first published in German in 1981, and Ronald Inden,
''Orientalist Constructions of India'', *Modern Asian Studies*, 20 (1986): 401-46.

[3] Although Said, in his study of Orientalism, does not ignore this period, he
discusses only briefly the history of the study of the Veda. This circumstance is
largely a result of Said's focus on British-French and American materials (see,
Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 17-18); for, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the
study of the Veda was an enterprise largely undertaken by German, or German
trained, scholars.

[4] Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, p. 30.

⁵ H. T. Colebrooke, *Essays on the Religion and Philosophy of the Hindus* (1805; reprint, London: Williams & Norgate, 1858), p. 69. The influence of Colebrooke's remark can be seen in W. D. Whitney, "On the Main Results of the Later Vedic Researches in Germany", *JAOS* 3 (1853): 292; F. Max Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita: The Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans*, vol. VI (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1874), p. vi. The early quest for the Veda is discussed by Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, pp. 31-2.

⁶ On the history of the first academic chairs in Europe for the study of Sanskrit, see, Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, pp. 78-80.

⁷ C. R. Lanman long ago recognized that "these first editions ought now to be regarded as provisional, and that the coming generation of Indianists must set to work to make new editions, uniform in general plan and in typography, and provided with manifold conveniences for quick and effective study" (Lanman, *A Sanskrit Reader* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929], p. 9; cf., idem, "India and the West", *Journal of the International School of Vedic and Allied Research*, vol. 1 [1929]: 9). However, as Indology lost its preoccupation with the Vedic texts (despite Max Müller's prediction that "the Veda...will occupy scholars for centuries to come" [Max Müller, trans., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita: The Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans*, vol. 1 (London: Trübner & Co., 1869), p. x]) few new editions were ever produced.

⁸ By this statement I do not mean to portray Indology today as a discipline that, as Said defines Orientalism, represents a continuing tradition of creating an "other," the Orient, for the purposes of establishing and maintaining the cultural hegemony of the West (Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 6-8), a notion which has had wide influence, but has not gained general acceptance. The "principles of Orientalism" that are my concern in this study are those which culminated, for Indologists of the late nineteenth century, in the confusion of a romantic yearning for ancient India with a repulsion for later (in fact, all post-Rgvedic) Indian culture. The result of this can be seen in the creation by these scholars of the fiction of the Veda, almost certainly for the purpose of appropriating it as their own inheritance, as an entity separable from the whole of the Hindu tradition. The continued existence of this fiction is, I believe, the legacy modern Indology has inherited from the Indologists of the last century, and, through them, from the early days of Orientalism.

⁹ See further, M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, vol. 1, trans. V. S. Sarma (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981), p. 18; W. D. Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1853), pp. 291-3.

¹⁰ As Eric Sharpe notes, Max Müller "was never again to publish any work of pure scholarship to compare with his *Rig Veda*" (Sharpe, *Comparative Religion* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975], p. 37). Müller's work is assessed in a similar manner by E. W. Hopkins, "Max Müller," in, Thomas A. Sebeok, ed., *Portraits of Linguists*, vol. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), pp. 395-99.

¹¹ Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, pp. 138, 141, 148. Whitney was one of several scholars (Andrew Lang was another—see, R. Dorson, "The Eclipse of Solar Mythology," in, *Myth: A Symposium*, Thomas Sebeok, ed. [Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1965], pp. 25-63) who relentlessly criticized Max Müller's work.

¹² Max Müller's ability to excite the popular imagination was apparent even in his earliest days at Oxford, where his preoccupation with the Rgveda deeply impressed not only his contemporaries, but seems also to have led the man in the

street to the "vague notion...that the handsome young German had discovered a strange religion older than the Jewish or Christian, which also contained the key to many religious mysteries" (N. Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary: The Life of Professor the Rt. Hon. Friedrich Max Müller* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1974], p. 64; cf., 98). Thirty years later, when Müller was invited to deliver the Hibbert Lectures, 1400 applications for tickets were received for a hall that seated 600; to accommodate the crowd Müller lectured twice daily (ibid, p. 357).

   [13] F. Max Müller, *Chips From a German Workshop*, vol. 1 (1869; reprint, Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), p. 26.

   [14] Müller, trans. *The Upanishads*, part 1, p. xi.

   [15] In a letter to Max Müller's wife, after Max Müller's death, E. B. Cowell noted that Max Müller's greatest service to the course of Sanskrit studies was "interesting such a wide circle of readers by his enthusiastic lectures and disquisitions..." (cited in Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary*, p. 262; cf., 145). See, also, Hopkins, "Max Müller," in, Sebeok, ed., *Portraits of Linguists*, vol, 1, p. 396.

   [16] J. Charpentier, Review of *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, by A. B. Keith, *Bulletin of the London University School of Oriental Studies*, IV (1926): 338.

   [17] Ibid, p. 345.

   [18] Scholars of the last century avoided studying India's later traditions, finding them culturally obscure and, at times, morally repugnant. This same ethnocentrism, however, drove scholars *to* the study of the Veda. For, the discovery of a shared Indo-European scholars to posit the existence of a monolithic *ur*-culture, and the Vedic hymns were perceived to be the "oldest, the most authentic, the most copious documents for the study of Indo-European archeology and history" (Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, p. 63).

   [19] Charpentier suggests that this viewpoint had been challenged before the publication of Keith's *Religion and Philosophy*, "but these heretical suggestions have left Professor Keith quite untouched" (Charpentier, Review of *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, p. 338). On the tendency of nineteenth century Indologists to separate the Ṛgveda from the later Vedic texts, see, H. Tull, *The Vedic Origins of Karma* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), pp. 14-21.

   [20] See, e.g., Madeleine Biardeau, *Hinduism: The Anthropology of a Civilization*, trans. Richard Nice (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 4-5.

   [21] Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, p. 43.

   [22] Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, cited in Müller, trans., *The Upanishads*, part 1, p. lxi.

   [23] Rudolph von Roth, *Sanskrit Lexicon*, cited in J. Muir, "On the Interpretation of the Veda," *JRAS* n.s. 2 (1866): 309.

   [24] See, Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, p. 38.

   [25] Marshall, *The British Discovery of Hinduism*, p. 10.

   [26] Cited in ibid, p. 187.

   [27] H. H. Wilson, trans., *The Vishnu Purana* (London: John Murray, 1840), p. lxxv.

   [28] Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, p. 79; Kopf, *British Orientalism*, p. 135.

   [29] In a letter written to W. D. Whitney in 1852, Albrecht Weber, the German Sanskritist, noted: "It is certainly very discouraging to see that Professor Wilson during all the time since he got his professorship in Oxford, has not succeeded in bringing up even one Sanskrit scholar who might claim to be regarded as one who has done at least some little service to our Sanskrit philology" (cited by Thomas Day Seymour, "William Dwight Whitney," in, Sebeok, ed., *Portraits of Linguists*, vol. 1, p. 405).

[30] Monier Williams, "Manifesto for the Boden Professorship", cited by Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary*, p. 224. Chaudhuri describes in detail the acrimonious fight between Monier Williams and Max Müller for the Boden Professorship (ibid, pp. 220-29).

[31] Ibid, p. 230.

[32] See further, Richard Gombrich, *On Being Sanskritic*, Boden Inaugural Lecture, delivered 14 October 1977 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

[33] Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), p. ix. Monier-Williams himself stated "I have made it the chief aim of my professorial life to provide facilities for the translation of our sacred scriptures into Sanskrit" (ibid). Max Müller, in what seems to be an attempt to inflate the "practical" importance of his work, suggested a link between his Rgveda edition and the work of the Christian missionaries; he thus observed that before his edition of the Rgveda appeared, the Brahmans freely claimed "there was no commandment of the Old Testament...no doctrine of Christianity which had not been anticipated in the Veda," and "if the missionaries were incredulous and called for the manuscripts, they were told so sacred a book could not be exposed to the profane looks of unbelievers" (Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 2 [London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1867], p. 306).

[34] Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. ix.

[35] See, Max Müller, *Auld Lang Syne*, second series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), pp. 4-5.

[36] See, Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary*, pp. 104-9.

[37] Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 1, pp. 103-4.

[38] Müller, trans. *The Upanishads*, part 1, p. xxxvii.

[39] In his preface to the Sacred Books of the East Müller noted he "felt obliged to leave certain passages untranslated," explaining that ancient man was "an animal, with all the strength and weaknesses of an animal..." (Müller, trans. *The Upanishads*, part 1, p. xxi).

[40] Ibid, p. xxxvii.

[41] See, ibid, p. x (quoted at the beginning of this essay); and, p. xxxviii, for Müller's use of these terms.

[42] For a detailed study of the Rgveda's role in the larger development of Max Müller's thought, see, R. Neufeldt, *F. Max Müller and the Rgveda* (Columbia, Missouri: South Asia Books, 1980).

[43] See, e.g., Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita: The Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans*, vol. I (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1849), p. vi; idem, *Rig-Veda-Sanhita: The Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans*, vol. III (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1856), pp. vi ff.; idem, *Rig-Veda-Sanhita: The Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans*, vol. V (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1872), p. vii; idem, *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, pp. vi ff. In the lengthy preface to this last volume, Müller presents what appears to be nothing more than an extended defense for his decision to edit Sāyaṇa.

[44] Max Müller, *My Autobiography, A Fragment* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), pp. 178-9; cf., idem, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, p. vi.

[45] Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, p. 65. Max Müller remarked that Albrecht Weber also complained "in language not quite worthy of him" of the delays in publication (Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, p. xlv).

[46] In the preface to the last volume of the Rgveda, Max Müller sought to defend himself from what "has been broadly hinted;" stating: "Nothing was ordered for press that I had not myself carefully examined and revised..." (Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, p. xxxiv). Hopkins wrote, after Müller's death, that: "What

he constantly proclaimed to be his own great work, the edition of the 'Rig Veda', was in reality not his at all. A German scholar [Aufrecht] did the work, and Müller appropriated the credit for it'' (Hopkins, ''Max Müller'', in, Sebeok ed., *Portraits of Linguists*, vol. 1, p. 396). See, further, Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary*, pp. 260-2.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 1, pp. 1-48, 61-100; idem, *India: What Can It Teach Us?* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), pp. 161-275; idem, *Auld Lang Syne*, pp. 185-260; idem, *Contributions to the Science of Mythology*, vols. 1 & 2, (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), passim.

⁴⁸ Benfey's work was preceded by Stevenson's edition of the Sāmaveda, completed in India, but brought to press in England by H. H. Wilson in 1843.

⁴⁹ See, Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, p. v.

⁵⁰ Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. I, p. v.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. vi. While Max Müller was still in Paris, Otto Böhtlingk, at the Imperial Academy in St. Petersburg, offered to become Max Müller's collaborator, even publishing an announcement of their forthcoming joint effort. Though Müller realized ''If the Academy could have got the necessary MSS. from Paris and London, I should have been perfectly helpless,'' he retained his independence (and, so too, his ''rights'' to the Ṛgveda project), by remaining ''quietly in Paris'' (Müller, *My Autobiography*, p. 182).

⁵² Müller, *Auld Lang Syne*, second series, p. 24. In his autobiography, Max Müller looks back to an incident that occurred when he and Roth were students together in Paris as the source of what became a lifelong enmity. Müller and Roth were to share a lunch of oysters when, ''Roth, to my great surprise...being very fond of oysters...took a very unfair share of that delicacy, and whenever I met him in afterlife...this incident would always crop up in my mind; and when later on he offered to join me in editing the Rigveda, I declined, perhaps influenced by that early impression...'' (idem, *My Autobiography*, p. 171). Müller's penchant for the trivial is also reflected in the many vehement attacks (presented in the form of rebuttals) he mounted on his critics; see, e.g., idem, ''In Self-Defense,'' in, Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 4 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1875), pp. 473-549; idem, trans., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, xliii ff.; idem, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, pp. xlv ff.

⁵³ See e.g., Müller, *Auld Lang Syne*, second series, p. 15. In this volume Max Müller referred to himself as ''the misguided man who sacrificed everything to the Veda'' (ibid, p. 186).

⁵⁴ See, e.g., W. D. Whitney, ''Müller's Chips from a German Workshop,'' in Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, second series (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1874), pp. 127-48; cf., Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary*, pp. 258-61; and, Seymour, ''William Dwight Whitney,'' in, Sebeok, ed., *Portraits of Linguists*, vol. 1, pp. 420-1.

⁵⁵ Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, p. 113.

⁵⁶ Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. I, p. vii. Cf., Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary*, p. 262.

⁵⁷ F. Max Müller, *Rig-Veda-Sanhita: The Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans*, vol. IV (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1862), p. lxxvi.

⁵⁸ Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. V, p. v.

⁵⁹ See, Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, pp. xi-xxxix.

⁶⁰ F. Max Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita: The Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans*, vol. II (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1854), p. lix.

⁶¹ Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. I, p. xiii.

⁶² Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, p. xi.

⁶³ Although Müller remarked that "no one could have rejoiced more sincerely than I did at the publication [of Aufrecht's Ṛgveda]" (Müller, trans., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. 1, p. xliii), he devoted twenty pages to criticizing several small errors in Aufrecht's text, noting that "in truly critical scholarship there is nothing trifling" (ibid, p. xlv).

⁶⁴ Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, p. 113.

⁶⁵ Müller, *My Autobiography*, p. 203.

⁶⁶ Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, p. vi; cf., idem, *My Autobiography*, p. 178.

⁶⁷ Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. I, p. xxviii. Max Müller was paid £4 for every sheet printed, enough to "enable him to live at ease" at Oxford (Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary*, p. 60).

⁶⁸ Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, vol. 1, p. 63.

⁶⁹ H. H. Wilson, trans., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. I, 2nd ed. (London: N. Trübner, 1866), p. xlix.

⁷⁰ H. H. Wilson, trans., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. II (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1854), p. xx.

⁷¹ Roth, *Sanskrit Lexicon*, cited in Muir, "On the Interpretation of the Veda," p. 309.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Wilson, trans. *Rig-Veda Sanhita*, vol. II, p. xx.

⁷⁴ Muir, "On the Interpretation of the Veda," p. 397.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 400.

⁷⁶ E. B. Cowell, Preface to *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. IV, trans., Wilson, et al. (London: N. Trübner, 1866), p. vi.

⁷⁷ E. B. Cowell, Preface to *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. V, trans., Wilson, et al. (London: N. Trübner, 1888), p. vii.

⁷⁸ Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. III, p. vi.

⁷⁹ See e.g., Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, second series, pp. 137-8.

⁸⁰ Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. III, p. vii.

⁸¹ Ibid. Wilson had used the term "traditional" in referring to Sāyaṇa's commentary to indicate his belief that Sāyaṇa was in possession of a tradition that extended, *unbroken*, to the Ṛgvedic period.

⁸² Müller, trans. *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, pp. viii-ix.

⁸³ See, Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. IV, p. lxxviii. Wilson's disapproval almost certainly became a factor in Max Müller's later failure to win the Boden professorship; although Wilson seems at first to have suggested that Max Müller should be his successor, just prior to his death, in 1860, he lent his support to Monier Williams (Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary*, p. 226).

⁸⁴ Roth, *Sanskrit Lexicon*, cited in Muir, "On the Interpretation of the Veda," p. 307.

⁸⁵ Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, p. 30.

⁸⁶ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 2.2.2.5-6; cf., 2.4.3.14.

⁸⁷ Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, p. 69. The view Roth and Whitney held regarding the Brāhmaṇa texts and their priestly authors reflected the typical "brahmin bashing" attitude of the colonial Indologists; the influential eighteenth century missionary-cum-anthropologist, Abbe J. A. Dubois, thus observed: "The priests of the Hindu religion, although too enlightened to be blinded by the follies which they instil into the minds of their weak fellow-countrymen, are none the less zealous in maintaining and encouraging the absurd errors which procure their

livelihood, and which keep them in that high estimation which they have wrongfully usurped'' (Abbe J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, trans. Henry K. Beauchamp, 3rd ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906], p. 575).

[88] Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, p. 30.

[89] Rudolph von Roth, ''On the Morality of the Veda'', trans. W. D. Whitney, *JAOS* 3 (1853): 347.

[90] Ibid, p. 101. This essay, though written by Whitney, was first read publicly at Heidelberg by Roth.

[91] Max Müller, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (1859; reprint, New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., 1926), p. 7. Cf., William Jones, ''On the Hindus,'' reprinted in Marshall, *The British Discovery of Hinduism*, p. 252.

[92] Roth, *Sanskrit Lexicon*, cited in Muir, ''On the Interpretation of the Veda,'' p. 309.

[93] Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 1, p. 4. This assertion concealed a larger racial argument, as Müller continued: ''We are by nature Aryan, Indo-European, not Semitic: our spiritual kith and kin are to be found in India, Persia, Greece, Italy, Germany; not in Mesopotamia, Egypt, or Palestine'' (ibid). Müller also registered his support for Benfey's argument ''in favor of a more northern, if not European, origin of the whole Aryan family of speech...'' (F. Max Müller, ''On the Results of the Science of Language,'' in, Max Müller, *Selected Essays on Language, Mythology, and Religion*, vol. 1 [London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881, p. 188]).

[94] F. Max Müller, *India: What Can It Teach Us?* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), p. 49.

[95] Müller, ed. *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. III, p. ix.

[96] F. Max Müller, ''Hymns of the Gaupāyanas and the Legend of King Asmāti'', *JRAS*, n.s. 2 (1866): 452; cf., 440.

[97] In the last volume of his Ṛgveda (written after twenty-five years of criticism over Sāyaṇa) Müller observed: ''The life of a scholar would not be worth living, if, in return for many things which he has to surrender, he did not secure for himself that one inestimable privilege of owing allegiance to no person, no party, to no school or clique, but being able at all times to speak the truth...'' (Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, p. liii). See, also, Max Müller, ''In Self-Defense,'' in, Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. IV, pp. 473-549.

[98] Müller, ''Hymns of the Gaupāyanas'', p. 452.

[99] Ibid, p. 427.

[100] Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. I, p. xxii.

[101] Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. III, p. vii.

[102] See, Müller, *Contributions to the Science of Mythology*, p. 68 ff.; cf., Dorson, ''The Eclipse of Solar Mythology,'' p. 31. Müller's notion of the ''disease of language'' can also be seen in his view of language in general, his studies of which, as Hopkins notes, ''perhaps had the widest influence... [though] they were not very correct'' (Hopkins, ''Max Müller,'' in, Sebeok, *Portraits of Linguists*, vol. I, p. 398). Müller proposed that language originated as a true reflection of thought itself, and then, with the passing of time, became ''dead'' or ''empty''; a process visible in the formal changes of a particular language (see, e.g., Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. IV, pp. 99-100; cf., Whitney, *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, p. 248).

[103] Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. III, p. viii; cf., idem, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 227-28.

[104] See, e.g., Müller, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 7-8; idem, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 2, p. 129.

[105] See, e.g., Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 2, p. 309; and, Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, p. 39.

[106] Müller, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 279, 227.

[107] Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. III, p. viii.

[108] See, e.g., Müller, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 278, 227.

[109] Ibid, p. 241.

[110] Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 1, p. 114. Cf., idem, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 204: "It is most important to the historian that he should know how soon the fresh and healthy growth of a nation can be blighted by priestcraft and superstition."

[111] Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 1, p. 113.

[112] Müller, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 204. In his essay, "Comparative Mythology," written in 1856, Müller questioned how myths, most of which were "absurd and irrational" arose; he asked: "Was there a period of temporary insanity, through which the human mind had to pass, and was it a madness identically the same in the south of India and in the north of Iceland?" (Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 2, p. 11). Müller's view of mythology mirrors precisely his views of language and religion; Müller saw the history of all three (language, mythology, and religion) as an inevitable movement from an original ideal state into a state of decay, disease, or, insanity.

[113] Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. III, p. ix.

[114] Ibid, p. vii.

[115] Müller, "Hymns of the Gaupāyanas", p. 429.

[116] See, ibid.

[117] Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. I, p. xiii.

[118] Müller, *India: What Can It Teach Us?*, p. 33.

[119] See, e.g., Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 2, p. 309.

[120] Müller, *Auld Lang Syne*, second series, pp. 4-5.

[121] Roth, "On the Morality of the Veda," p. 347.

[122] See, Müller, ed., *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, vol. VI, pp. xlv-liii.

[123] Eggeling's work on this text also recalls the influence of his former teacher, Albrecht Weber, who had produced a critical Sanskrit edition of the White Yajurveda (*without* Sāyaṇa's commentary) and its Brāhmaṇa, the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, which Weber declared occupied "the most significant and important position of all the Brāhmaṇas" (Albrecht Weber, *History of Indian Literature*, trans. J. Mann and T. Zacharie, 2nd ed. [London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1904], p. 116).

[124] Though Macdonell succeeded Monier-Williams and Wilson as Boden professor, and produced, just as they did, a Sanskrit-English Dictionary, he perhaps sought to dissociate his work from that of his English predecessors. In listing sources in his *A Practical Sanskrit English Dictionary* (which is dedicated to the memory of F. Max Müller), Macdonell fails to mention Monier-Williams' dictionary, but notes his dependence on the Wörterbuch of Böhtlingk and Roth, which he states represents "the most important event in the history of Sanskrit research... undertaken in an age when strictly scientific methods had begun to be applied to scholarship" (A. A. Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924], p. xi).

[125] *Dictionary of National Biography, 1941-50*, s.v. "Keith, Arthur Berriedale."

[126] Charpentier, Review of *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, p. 337.

[127] *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1941-50, s.v. "Keith, Arthur Berriedale."

[128] A. B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Harvard Oriental Series, vols. 31 & 32 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925), p. 440.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid, p. 586.

[131] Ibid, p. 442.

[132] Ibid, p. 443.

[133] As I have shown elsewhere, this myth represents a central ideology of the Brāhmaṇas, its importance is especially apparent in the agnicayana "section" of the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa; see, Tull, *The Vedic Origins of Karma*, chap. 3, passim.

[134] See, e.g., Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Tales of Sex and Violence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 3-6; Brian K. Smith *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual, and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 30-38; and Tull, *The Vedic Origins of Karma*, pp. 9, 14-19.

[135] Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," p. 445.

[136] See, Biardeau, *Hinduism*, pp. 4-6.

[137] Frits Staal, "The Agnicayana Project," in Staal, ed., *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983) II:469.

[138] Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual, and Religion*, p. 201.

LA QUÊTE DU SENS DANS LE SYMBOLISME YORUBA: LE CAS D'ERINLẸ

Hans Witte

Summary

The article shows that in Yoruba mythology Erinlẹ is a male hunter who is named after (or associated with) an elephant and who—for diverse reasons—is finally transformed into a water-spirit.

In his cult Erinlẹ is mainly venerated as a river-god who, like the river goddesses Ọṣun and Yẹmọya, blesses his followers with children.

In the iconography of his cult, however, the material symbols of a Yoruba water-spirit (terra-cotta pots with water and pebbles from the river: fans) are mixed with those that refer to the hunter and the symbol-complex of the god of iron and of the wilderness (iron chains; fly whisks; wrought iron staffs topped by birds).

Outside his cult Erinlẹ is sometimes symbolized by the image of an elephant with reference to his name. In the cult of his close friend Ṣango, the Ọyọ god of thunder, Erinlẹ is figurated as a mudfish or a human being with mudfish legs, symbolizing him as a water-spirit. Comparison with mudfish symbolism in other Yoruba cults suggests that this mudfish symbolism refers to Erinlẹ only when he is assimilated to Ṣango as the founding ancestor of the Ọyọ kingdom.

Erinlẹ est le dieu d'une rivière qui est vénéré à travers tout le territoire Yoruba au Nigéria. C'est une divinité masculine, qui en Ẹgbado est appelé Eyinlẹ. Le centre de son culte se situe à Ilobu, une petite ville non loin d'Oṣogbo, au bord de la rivière qui porte son nom.

L'étude du culte d'Erinlẹ offre un intérêt particulier pour l'analyse parce que dans ce culte deux systèmes symboliques, — l'un de la brousse, l'autre de l'eau —, sont entremêlés, tout en restant nettement distincts.

1. La mythologie d'Erinlẹ

Nous retrouvons la tension entre ces deux systèmes dans la mythologie d'Erinlẹ. Dans la plupart des récits mythologiques sur Erinlẹ on rapporte qu'il était un chasseur vivant dans la brousse (Johnson, 1921: 37; Abraham, 1946: 164; Bascom, 1969: 88; Wil-

liams, 1974: 91). D'autres versions prétendent qu'il était paysan, ou médecin herboriste (Thompson, 1969: 136-137). Dans presque tous les récits sur sa vie Erinlẹ disparaît finalement dans la terre où il se transforme en divinité d'une rivière. Cette transformation se serait déroulée précisément aux environs de la ville d'Ilobu.

La mythologie d'Erinlẹ nous offre plusieurs explications pour la transformation de chasseur en divinité aquatique: Erinlẹ aurait perdu une gageure avec le dieu du tonnerre Ṣango et de désespoir il se serait répandu sur la terre et transformé en rivière (Bascom, 1969: 88). On raconte aussi qu'il a essayé de sauver ses enfants qui mouraient de soif après avoir mangé du maïs et des haricots secs (Thompson, 1969: 136). Une version assez énigmatique indique qu'Erinlẹ s'est transformé en divinité aquatique après avoir heurté le pied contre une pierre empoisonnée (Thompson, 1969: 137). Johnson (1921: 37) et Abraham (1946: 164) disent plus simplement qu'Erinlẹ s'est noyé.

Denis Williams (1974: 91) raconte qu'Erinlẹ s'est changé en éléphant, avant de disparaître dans la terre comme un animal dans une trappe. Le nom d'Erinlẹ est composé de «erin» (éléphant) et «ile» (maison). Dans l'iconographie des Yoruba l'éléphant renvoie très souvent, sinon toujours, à Erinlẹ, mais curieusement dans ses propres sanctuaires l'image de l'éléphant ne figure pas. Williams ne dit d'ailleurs rien d'une transformation en divinité aquatique, mais seulement d'une transformation en éléphant. Cet auteur présente Erinlẹ uniquement comme chasseur et médecin.

Thompson (1969: 137) mentionne une version du mythe dans laquelle Erinlẹ est dépeint comme un puissant médecin-herboriste au nom d'Abatan, qui était surnommé Erin (Eléphant) à cause de sa taille. Il se serait transformé après sa mort en ruisseau, et à partir de là son nom changeait également d'Erin en Erinlẹ, à savoir «Eléphant-dans-l'eau» ou plus exactement «Eléphant-dans-ilẹ» (ilẹ = terre + eau). Dans cette version trois éléments importants du mythe (guérisseur, éléphant et rivière) sont associés, bien qu'obscurément.

Après son apothéose Erinlẹ fonde sous l'eau une ville-état appelée Ode Kobaye et organisée d'après le modèle de l'ancienne ville d'Ọyọ. On cherche d'ailleurs les origines du culte d'Erinlẹ à Ọyọ (cf. Thompson, 1969: 139, 151; Pemberton, 1989: 167).

2. *Le symbolisme des éléments cosmiques chez les Yoruba*

Le cosmos est pour les Yoruba structuré par deux éléments: aiye, le monde civilisé, et ọrun, l'autre monde. A l'intérieur de l'élément ọrun on peut distinguer entre le ciel d'une part qui est habité par des divinités en grande majorité masculines, et d'autre part ilẹ, les eaux boueuses de l'origine, c'est à dire la terre sauvage et les eaux. Les habitants principaux de la terre sèche sont les ancêtres (cf. Witte, 1988: 13), tandis que les eaux forment le séjour de divinités plutôt féminines comme les déesses de rivière Yẹmọja et Ọṣun ou encore du dieu de l'océan Olokun qui, selon Bascom (1980: 52), change de sexe de lieu en lieu.

L'image schématique du cosmos que je viens de tracer, offre des distinctions entre différents domaines qui représentent aussi des structures dans le monde symbolique des Yoruba. La mythologie des Yoruba montre pourtant que ces distinctions ne donnent pas lieu à des oppositions. D'un être mythique plus ou moins humain, et en tant que tel habitant d'aiye, Erinlẹ devient une divinité, habitant d'ilẹ sous sa forme aquatique. Evidemment tous les humains qui deviennent des ancêtres vont d'aiye vers ilẹ, cependant dans ce cas on peut objecter que les ancêtres ne sont pas des divinités (oriṣa). Pourtant les exemples de dieux qui changent de domaine abondent aussi: Odudua, dieu du ciel, devient roi d'Ifẹ, tout en restant un oriṣa; Ṣango, roi d'Ọyọ devient le dieu du tonnerre dans le ciel; la déesse de la rivière Ọya rejoint Ṣango son époux dans le ciel; Eṣu le trickster et messager est partout et nulle part chez lui, etc. Tous ces exemples soulignent la valeur relative des images schématiques du cosmos pour les Yoruba. Ils montrent aussi que l'unité de ce cosmos se maintient à travers les distinctions entre les différents domaines.

Bien que Erinlẹ soit présenté avant sa transformation comme un être humain et donc comme un habitant du monde civilisé, il est considéré avant tout comme un être mythique qui habite la brousse. Qu'il soit considéré comme un chasseur ou comme un médecin-herboriste, dans les deux cas il est un habitant des terres sauvages, de la brousse où le chasseur cherche les animaux et l'herboriste les plantes médicinales. En se transformant en divinité aquatique Erinlẹ passe à l'intérieur de l'élément ilẹ du composant sec au composant aquatique.

Le symbolisme de la brousse est chez les Yoruba axé sur le dieu du fer Ogun. Celui-ci donne les armes et les instruments de fer qui permettent aux humains de survivre parmi les dangers de la brousse. C'est pourquoi les chasseurs portent des bracelets de fer, de même que l'instrument caractéristique du culte d'Ọsanyin, dieu des herboristes est un bâton en fer forgé.

Dans le culte d'Erinlẹ l'accent porte sur son existence après son apothéose; il est d'abord célébré comme divinité de la rivière, qui apporte la fertilité aux humains. Néanmoins ses adhérents se souviennent encore des phases précédentes de sa vie en utilisant aussi les objets rituels des chasseurs et des guérisseurs. Peut-être le souvenir de son existence antérieure dans la brousse l'a-t-il empêché de se transformer en déesse: il est la seule divinité aquatique des Yoruba qui est nettement masculine (Witte, 1987: 133).

Résumons les images symboliques que nous trouvons dans les mythes d'Erinlẹ, avant de passer à son culte:

a. Erinlẹ est habitant des deux composants d'ilẹ, à savoir la brousse et les eaux.
b. Il traverse la frontière entre ces deux éléments et de ce fait il ressemble à un messager du genre d'Eṣu.
c. Comme guérisseur et comme chasseur il est un adhérent du dieu de fer Ogun.
d. Il est associé à l'image de l'éléphant.
e. Il est appelé «roi dans les eaux».

3. *L'iconographie du culte d'Erinlẹ*

Thompson (1969: 135) a souligné qu'il y a trois objets qui caractérisent le culte d'Erinlẹ: le pot en terre cuite; les bracelets de fer ou de bronze portés par les adhérents d'Erinlẹ; et le bâton en fer forgé couronné par un cercle d'oiseaux. Parmi ces objets (et tous les autres utilisés dans le culte d'Erinlẹ), c'est seulement la décoration du couvercle du pot en terre cuite qui est réservée exclusivement au culte d'Erinlẹ. Les autres objets renvoient soit au culte d'Ogun, soit à celui des eaux fertilisantes où le culte d'Erinlẹ ne se distingue pas de celui d'Ọṣun, de Yẹmọja et des autres déesses de rivière.

Examinons donc d'abord le pot de terre-cuite («awo-oto-erinlẹ»).

L'élément caractéristique est donc le couvercle couronné par plusieurs arches qui se rejoignent au milieu. Souvent on a modelé sur le point central une tête de femme ou une petite figure féminine sans jambes, qui présente entre ses mains une petite coupe pour une noix de cola et deux cauries (cf. Drewal, 1989: 230) qui représentent à la fois un sacrifice et un moyen de divination simple (fig. 1, 2). Thompson (o.c.) a montré que la forme du couvercle constitue la représentation schématique d'une couronne traditionelle des

Fig. 1. Awo-oto-erinlẹ, fait par Abatan Odefunke Ayinke Ija de Oke-Odan. Hauteur 43 cm. Publié dans M. Kecskesi, 1984: Abb. 266. Collection privée, Munich. Photo Swantje Autrum-Mulzer.

Fig. 2. Awo-oto-erinlẹ. Hauteur 39 cm. Collection Afrika Museum, Berg en Dal.

rois Yoruba: Erinlẹ est roi dans son domaine aquatique. Dans le pot on conserve de l'eau de riviére et quelques cailloux du lit riverain. Chaque novice dans le culte reçoit lors de son initiation deux de ces cailloux, qu'il garde avec l'eau dans le pot sur son autel domestique. Quand il en trouve d'autres en se baignant dans la rivière consacrée à Erinlẹ, il peut les ajouter aux autres. Les cailloux sont censés se multiplier spontanément dans le pot, témoignant des forces fertilisantes de l'eau (Thompson, 1969: 140-141).

On trouve des pots avec des cailloux et remplis d'eau sur les autels de toutes les déesses de rivières des Yoruba. Ce n'est pas la fonction du pot, mais la forme du couvercle qui renvoie spécifique-

ment à Erinlẹ. On trouve d'ailleurs les pots d'Erinlẹ non seulement sur les autels de cette divinité, mais encore sur ceux du dieu de tonnerre Ṣango (cf. infra et Thompson, o.c.) et ceux d'Ọya, son épouse (cf. Beier, 1957: pl. 25).

Les pots renvoient à sa fonction comme dieu des eaux et c'est aussi le cas pour les éventails rituels que certains de ses adhérents tiennent à la main. Ces éventails rappellent ceux de bronze du culte d'Ọṣun. Cette déesse impétueuse utilise son éventail non seulement pour se rafraîchir, mais encore comme une arme mortelle quand elle le lance contre ceux qui suscitent son courroux.

Selon moi les autres attributs du culte d'Erinlẹ ont trait à son existence en tant que chasseur ou guérisseur. J'ai mentionné déjà la chaîne de fer que ses adhérents portent au poignet droit. Selon Thompson (1969: 130), c'est une coutume antique des chasseurs Yoruba. Parfois on porte ces chaînes aussi autour du cou, et cette manière de porter est illustrée par l'usage de les mettre autour du cou des figurines en terre cuite sur les couvercles.

Le chasse-mouches que les adorateurs portent sur l'épaule est également un attribut traditionel de chasseur.

L'emblème par excellence d'Erinlẹ-guérisseur c'est le bâton de fer forgé portant des oiseaux en couronne (fig. 3). Il paraît que très souvent ces bâtons ne diffèrent nullement de ceux du culte d'Ọsanyin, le dieu des médecins-herboristes, mais il nous manque encore une étude détaillée à ce sujet. Thompson (1969: ch. 11) et Drewal (1980: 34-36) ont montré que la décoration du sommet, qui consiste en un cercle d'oiseaux autour d'un personnage humain ou d'un oiseau central, symbolise la situation du guérisseur qui chercher des plantes médicinales dans la brousse où il est constamment contrarié et menacé par les sorcières qui vivent là. Les maladies au sujet desquelles les guérisseurs sont consultés, sont très souvent provoquées par les sorcières; sous cet angle guérisseurs et sorcières sont nettement antagonistes.

Dans une variante de ces bâtons le cercle d'oiseaux a été remplacé par des représentations d'instruments d'agriculture et de chasse (renvoyant à Ogun), d'emblêmes de Ṣango (l'ami d'Erinlẹ) et de serpents qui sont les messagers d'Erinlẹ (fig. 4).

Thompson (1971: ch. 11/2-3) souligne que l'iconographie d'Ọsanyin et d'Erinlẹ comme guérisseur est marquée par des renvois à Ogun qui fournit les instruments pour combattre les sorcières.
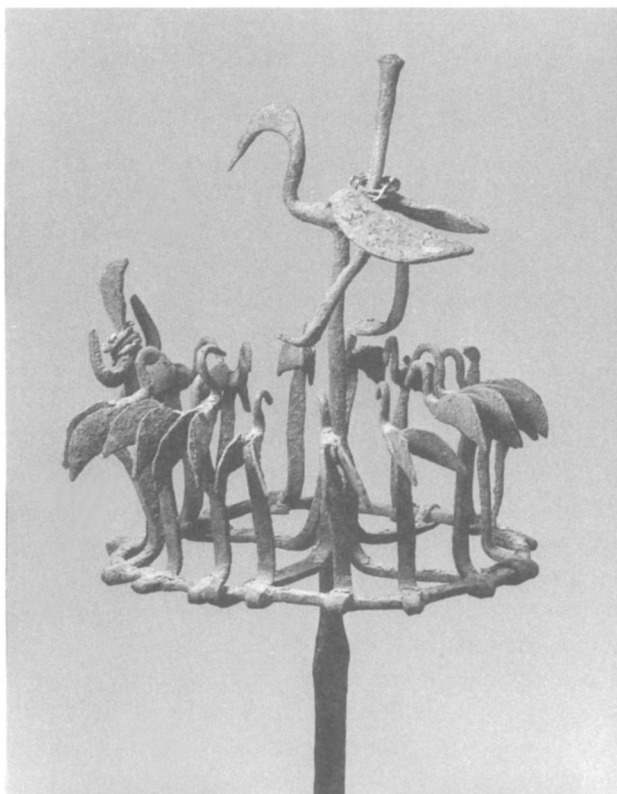
Fig. 3. Bâton en fer forgé pour le culte d'Ọsanyin ou d'Erinlẹ; 80,5 cm., la partie figurée 21,5 cm. Collection Afrika Museum, Berg en Dal.

Ulli Beier nous a donné déjà en 1957 un bon aperçu des sanctuaires d'Erinlẹ dans Ilobu, centre de son culte. Très souvent on trouve dans ces sanctuaires les statues d'un cavalier et d'une femme avec un enfant (cf. aussi Witte, 1987). De telles statues ne sont nullement typiques pour le culte d'Erinlẹ, on les rencontre dans le culte de nombreuses divinités très différentes l'une de l'autre. Certains détails comme le chasse-mouches que porte le cavalier indiquant qu'il s'agit d'un chasseur, ne reçoivent une signification spécifique que dans le contexte de l'ensemble du culte et alors ce chasseur peut référer à Erinlẹ.
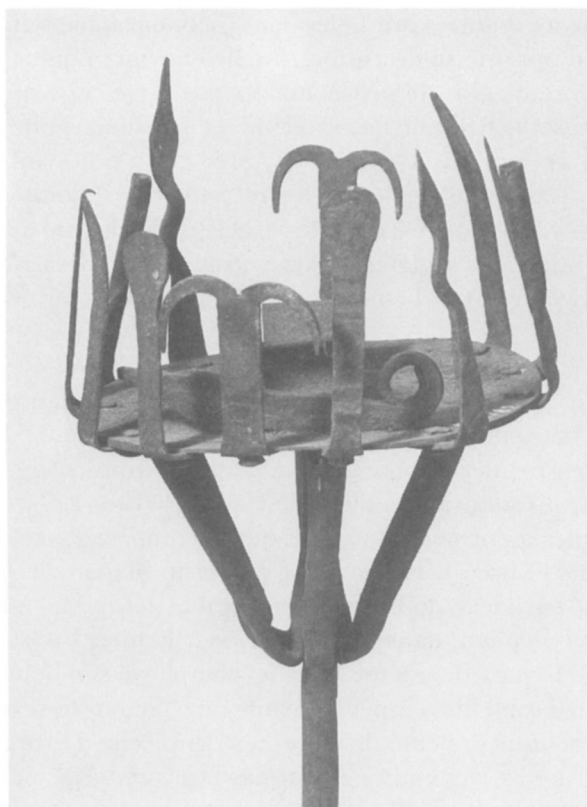
Fig. 4. Bâton en fer forgé pour le culte d'Ọsanyin ou d'Erinlẹ; 42 cm., la partie figurée 18 cm. Collection Afrika Museum, Berg en Dal.

En général des objets emblématiques qui renvoient sans équivoque à une divinité précise, comme p.e. les doubles haches de Ṣango, sont rares dans l'iconographie religieuse des Yoruba. C'est que le caractère spécifique d'un culte ne se traduit pas, le plus souvent, dans la morphologie des objets, mais plutôt dans la combinaison de chants, danses, gestes rituels, sacrifices et couleurs.

Les images d'une maternité ou d'un cavalier symbolisent d'une façon très générale le rôle de la femme et de l'homme dans la société (cf. Witte, 1985/86). De telles images figurent dans de nombreux sanctuaires de divinités différentes; même à l'intérieur d'un culte donné elles ne reçoivent que rarement une signification spécifique.

Il y a encore d'autres symboles dans l'iconographie religieuse des
Yoruba qui ont une signification rituelle et symbolique ni générale
ni liée à un seul culte. Je pense aux pots de terre cuite qui contien-
nent de l'eau fraîche et des cailloux et à l'image du silure sur
laquelle je reviendrai. Les pots en terre cuite qui symbolisent la
puissance fertilisante des eaux, se retrouvent — comme indiqué
plus haut — non seulement sur les autels d'Erinlẹ, ou sur ceux des
autres divinités des rivières, mais encore dans les sanctuaires de
Ṣango, d'Ọya, etc. (cf. Pemberton, 1989: 166, 167; Drewal, 1989a:
pl. 177).

Il reste étonnant que l'image sans équivoque de l'éléphant qui
renvoie directement au nom d'Erinlẹ, ne figure pas dans le culte de
ce dernier. Et cela d'autant plus qu'en dehors de ce culte l'éléphant
indique bien Erinlẹ, comme il en va pour des miroirs (fig. 5) ou des
boîtes pour les utensiles de l'oracle Ifa (cf. Witte, 1987: 135-136).
Ces exemples montrent en tout cas que le composant «erin» (= élé-
phant) dans le nom d'Erinlẹ n'est pas resté inaperçu.

Ce n'est pas facile de trouver une explication pour l'absence de
l'image de l'éléphant dans le culte même d'Erinlẹ. J'ai suggéré ail-
leurs (1987) que, de même que le complexe symbolique de la
brousse dans son culte empêche Erinlẹ de changer de sexe, le com-
plexe symbolique des eaux fertilisantes l'empêche d'être identifié à
l'éléphant. Le roi des eaux ne peut pas être symbolisé par le roi de
la brousse.

En dehors du contexte immédiat du culte d'Erinlẹ il est
presqu'impossible de renvoyer directement à lui, parce qu'il lui
manque des objets emblématiques sans équivoque, et il devient iné-
vitable de recourir alors à l'image de l'éléphant indiquée par son
nom.

Il existe pourtant une image beaucoup plus énigmatique qui ren-
voie à Erinlẹ pour marquer la présence de ce dernier dans le culte
d'autres divinités, c'est l'image du silure.

4. *Erinlẹ et le symbolisme du silure*

Le symbole du silure — et du personnage aux jambes de silure
qui fait partie du complexe symbolique de ce poisson — occupe une
place centrale dans le symbolisme religieux des Bini où il renvoie
au dieu de la mer Olokun et à la royauté. Chez les Yoruba ce com-

Fig. 5. Boîte pour miroir. Bois, 35 cm. Collection Afrika Museum, Berg en Dal.

plexe symbolique joue un rôle dans l'iconographie des sociétés Ogboni et Oro et dans les cultes d'Odudua, d'Ifa, d'Erinlẹ et, d'une certaine manière, de Ṣango. Curieusement dans tous ces cultes le silure ne constitue qu'une image marginale, c'est à dire figurant non pas sur les objets qui sont significatifs pour ces cultes, mais sur des objets dépourvus de caractère spécifique comme p.e. les portes de palais ou de sanctuaire (fig. 6), les tambours (fig. 7 et 8), ou encore les poits en terre cuite consacrés à Erinlẹ qu'on voit sur les autels de Ṣango.

Précisons d'abord le genre de poisson dont il s'agit, ou plutôt les genres, car l'image symbolique que nous indiquons par le mot «silure» réunit les caractéristiques de nombreuses espèces biologiques (cf. Jacki Gallagher, 1983). Nous avons d'abord les espèces Malapterus electricus et Clarias anguillaris, qui portent des poils sensoriels au museau et des nageoires près des branchies; ces parti-

Fig. 6. Porte de palais ou de sanctuaire en Ịẹbu. bois, 130 × 88 cm. Collection Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich, nr. 87-309992. Photo: Swantje Autrum-Mulzer.

cularités manquent rarement dans les témoins iconographiques. Ces images par contre montrent parfois des écailles que les espèces mentionnées n'ont pas, et qui peuvent venir des espèces Synodontis. Bagrus, et Protopterus. L'espèce Clarias est appelée pour des bonnes raisons «anguillaris»: dans l'iconographie son corps d'anguille se transforme facilement en serpent et même en rubans ondulants ou tressés (fig. 6).

Fig. 7. Tambour ''Gbedu'', région d'Ijẹbu. Bois et cuir, 39 cm. Collection privée. Photo: Bas Timmermans.

Par quelles propriétés de ces poissons la représentation iconographique que nous indiquons par le nom de «silure» devient-elle significative? Un poisson qui vit dans le fond boueux des mares, constituerait déjà de ce fait un excellent symbole des eaux boueuses de l'origine, ce mélange de terre et d'eau que les Yoruba appellent «ilẹ». En outre le silure peut aussi ramper en dehors de l'eau pour atteindre d'autres mares ou des terres inondées. Pendant la saison sèche il se cache dans la boue et semble y mourir pour renaître au temps des pluies. Cette capacité de revigorisation et de résurrection explique pourquoi l'image du silure est devenue le symbole de la force vivifiante d'ilẹ, donc des eaux et de la terre (Fraser, 1974: 11). Le silure vit dans la boue, le Synodontus peut ramper sur la terre sèche, le Clarias peut rester longtemps en dehors de l'eau grâce à

Fig. 8. Même que fig. 7, verso.

ses poumons auxiliaires. Toutes ces caractéristiques produisent l'image symbolique d'un animal qui non seulement renaît, mais qui est encore un habitant des deux domaines d'ilẹ, et qui pour cette raison est donc un être qui franchit des limites à la manière d'un messager.

D'autres qualités des poissons qui contribuent à l'image symbolique du silure augmentent le caractère numineux de sa signification. Le Synodontis et quelques autres espèces ont des épines vénéneuses qui provoquent des blessures douloureuses et difficiles à guérir. L'espèce Malapterus Electricus, qui parfois atteint une longueur de 150 centimètres, est craint dans toute l'Afrique occidentale pour la commotion électrique dépassant 450 volts qu'il peut produire (cf. J. Gallagher, o.c.).

J'ai indiqué déjà que le complexe symbolique du silure contient

également l'image d'un personnage humain aux jambes de pois-
son. La variante Yoruba se distingue de celle des Bini par le fait que
le personnage tient ses jambes avec ses mains (fig. 8, 9; cf. Fraser,
1972: 273). La charge symbolique de cette image énigmatique sem-
ble encore plus grande que celle du poisson comme tel, qui est sou-
vent présenté dans l'iconographie enroulé sur lui-même et traversé
par une ou deux broches, état dans lequel on l'offre au marché
comme une délicatesse.

J'ai étudié ailleurs le symbolisme du silure et du personnage aux
jambes de silure (Witte, 1982b; 1984) et je dois me limiter ici à la
symbolisation d'Erinlẹ. Je veux seulement rappeler qu'il s'est opéré
un changement d'opinion chez les spécialistes (H. J. Drewal c.p.,
1989a et b; J. Pemberton c.p.; 1985; Witte, 1982 a et b, 1984,
1988) quant au symbolisme de la terre chez les Yoruba. En accord
avec la littérature j'ai interprété d'abord le silure dans le contexte
des sociétés Ogboni et Oro comme un symbole des esprits de la
terre et surtout de la grande mère chtonique Onilẹ (cf. Witte, 1982
a et b). Depuis j'ai exposé les raisons pour supposer que l'existence
même de la Grande Mère Onilẹ est douteuse et que le silure et le
personnage aux jambes de silure, s'ils représentent d'une certaine
manière les esprits de la terre, ils symbolisent avant tout les princi-
paux habitants de la terre, c'est à dire les ancêtres et notamment
les fondateurs de la communauté, à savoir les ancêtres du roi. En
dernière analyse il s'agit d'Odudua, sur qui tous les rois tradition-
nels des Yoruba et celui de Bénin fondent leur généalogie (Drewal
1989 a et b; Witte, 1988).

Il serait impossible dans le cadre de cet article d'étudier les signi-
fications du symbole du silure dans les différents cultes des Yoruba
où il intervient (cf. Witte, 1982b; 1984; 1988). Je ne peux que résu-
mer les conclusions de recherches précédentes:

1. dans l'iconographie Ogboni et Oro le silure et le personnage aux
   jambes de poisson renvoient, comme je l'ai dit, aux fondateurs
   de la communauté, c'est à dire les ancêtres du roi. Le plus sou-
   vent cet ancêtre est Odudua. Drewal (1989a: 136 et fig. 143)
   indique que le personnage aux jambes de silure sur des tam-
   bours à Ijẹbu renvoie à la déesse de la mer Olokun, ce qui
   reflète, à mon avis, l'influence de Bénin dans cette région.
2. Dans l'iconographie Ogboni le silure est absent sur les objets qui
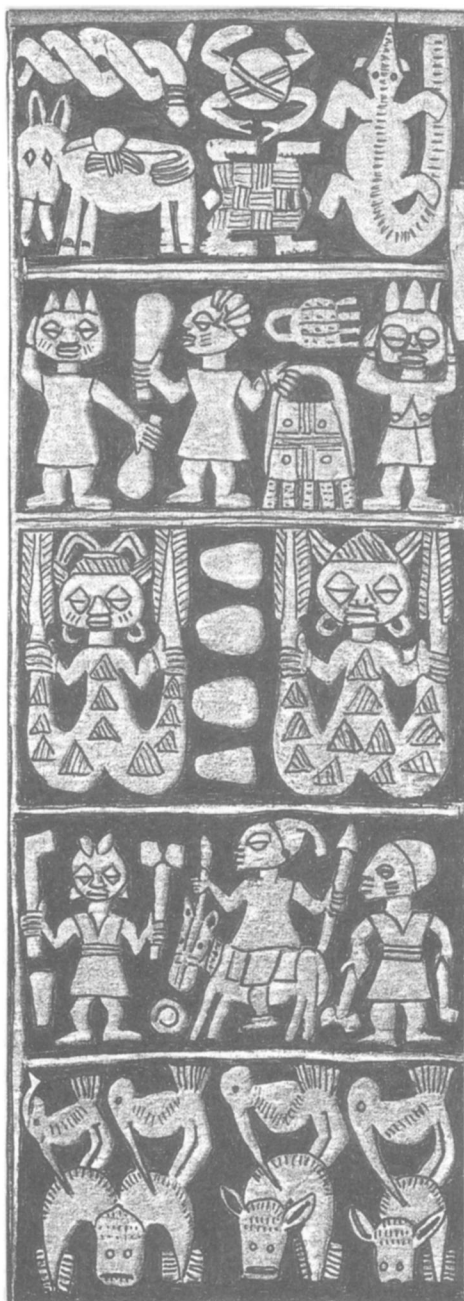
Fig. 9. Porte d'un sanctuaire de Ṣango. Bois. Collection John Dintenfass. Publié in: B. Guggenheim, 1973 par African Arts et les Régents de l'Université de Californie. Dessin de l'auteur d'après une photo de J. Dintenfass.

sont caractéristiques de cette société, c'est à dire les edans
ogboni, les hochets, les bâtons de parade; il figure sur les tam-
bours et les portes du temple.

3. Le complexe symbolique du silure ne semble jouer aucun rôle
    dans le culte même d'Odudua comme divinité; pourtant il indi-
    que Odudua comme l'ancêtre du roi sur les portes du palais.

4. Dans le cadre de l'iconographie de l'oracle Ifa, l'image du silure
    ou du personnage aux jambes de silure renvoient soit à Odudua
    ou à la royauté comme fondement de l'ordre social, soit au rôle
    de messager qui est imputé au silure à cause de son comporte-
    ment quasi-amphibique. D'autres messagers qui figurent dans
    l'iconographie Ifa sont les crocodiles et les serpents d'eau, et sur-
    tout Eṣu, le messager et trickster par excellence.

En examinant ces conclusions nous ne serons plus étonnés de
constater qu'Erinlẹ est — comme Odudua — uniquement symbo-
lisé par un personnage aux jambes de silure en dehors du contexte
direct de son culte et de son temple. Erinlẹ se déguise pour ainsi
dire en silure quand il visite dans son temple son ami Ṣango le dieu
du tonnerre.

5. *Erinlẹ et Ṣango*

Dans quelques récits mythologiques (cf. Dennett, 1910: 189-190;
Bascom, 1969: 88) Erinlẹ est dépeint comme antagoniste ou rival
de Ṣango, mais le plus souvent on les considère comme des grands
amis. Quand Ṣango se démène en éclairs et tonnerre, Erinlẹ sait
l'appaiser.

Cette amitié est confirmée par leur présence mutuelle dans leurs
temples. Les emblèmes de Ṣango, c'est à dire la double hache («oṣe
Ṣango») et la calebasse-hochet («ṣerẹ Ṣango») sont parfois modelés
sur le ventre du pot en terre cuite («awo ota erinlẹ») caractéristique
du culte d'Erinlẹ (fig. 1; cf. Thompson, 1969: 151 et pl. 81, 83;
Kecskesi, 1984: 226; H. J. Drewal, 1989a: pl. 268). les mêmes
emblèmes se retrouvent sur les autels d'argile d'Erinlẹ (cf. Thomp-
son, 1969: 176 et pl. 94).

De son côté Erinlẹ est symbolisé dans les sanctuaires de Ṣango
par l'image du personnage aux jambes de silure, modelé sur les

grands pots en terre cuite appelés «ikoko» (cf. R. F. Thompson, 1971: Ch. 12/5 et pl. 10; Frobenius, 1912: 187, 217; Krieger, 1969: pl. 153, 154). Ces pots servent souvent de support aux coupes en bois («ọpọn ṣango») qui contiennent les pierres de foudre, les bâtons de danse à double hache et les hochets en calabasse du culte de Ṣango. Parfois les pots «ikoko» contiennent de l'eau fraîche de la rivière, comme les «awo ota Erinlẹ» sur les autels du dieu riverain.

En dehors de sa présence sur les pots «ikoko», Erinlẹ est encore représenté dans l'iconographie du dieu du tonnerre sur des rares statues (cf. Frobenius, 1912: 206) et sur des portes de ses sanctuaires. Un exemple de ces dernières a été analysé par Barbara Guggenheim (1973; cf. fig. 9). C'est, à ma connaissance, le seul exemple où Erinlẹ est montrè à la fois sous les images de l'éléphant (à gauche dans le registre supérieur), du silure (en bas), et de la personne humaine aux jambes de silure (au milieu).

Pourquoi Erinlẹ est-il symbolisé par le silure? Et pourquoi seulement en dehors de ses propres sanctuaires et de son culte proprement dit? Il est peu vraisemblable que le renvoi à Erinlẹ ajouterait une signification tout à fait nouvelle au complexe symbolique du silure comme nous l'avons trouvé dans d'autres cultes chez les Yoruba. Nous allons voir que les deux significations d'ancêtre royal et de messager ne s'excluent pas mutuellement, mais sont complémentaires.

Erinlẹ est bien considéré comme un roi qui vit sous l'eau, où il a fondé sa ville et son royaume de Kobaye. Il est pourtant difficile d'admettre qu'Erinlẹ soit le fondateur d'une communauté humaine; c'est seulement un ancêtre de rois dans la mesure où on l'associe (ou faut-il dire ici identifie?) à Ṣango qui a fondé la dynastie royale d'Ọyọ où il prend la place qu'occupe Odudua à Ifẹ. Or c'est précisément et uniquement dans le contexte de Ṣango qu'Erinlẹ est figuré par le complexe symbolique du silure. Il faut se rappeler qu'Erinlẹ et son culte sont censés avoir leur origine à Ọyọ, la ville de Ṣango.

Dans la ligne de cette interprétation on pourrait supposer qu'Erinlẹ est symbolisé sur la porte mentionnée (fig. 9) par l'image sans équivoque de l'éléphant, pour confirmer que les images siluriques sur la même porte renvoient également à Erinlẹ. Comme ami et associé de Ṣango, Erinlẹ est celui qui sait calmer l'impétuosité du

dieu de tonnerre, et il devient son alter ego. Le dieu riverain est présenté de la même façon que l'est Odudua sur les portes de palais. Sous cet angle on peut dire que l'image de l'éléphant sur la porte analysée par Guggenheim a la fonction de rendre explicite le fait que l'image des deux personnes aux jambes de silure dans le registre central ne symbolisent pas Odudua, mais Erinle comme un aspect de Ṣango.

L'autre élément dans la signification du symbolisme Yoruba du silure, celui de messager amphibique, n'est pas absent non plus dans l'iconographie d'Erinle. En effet Erinle est célébré dans son culte comme dans sa mythologie en tant que roi de la brousse et de l'eau. Le fait qu'Erinle figure sous forme silurique précisément sur les pots «ikoko» qui contiennent l'eau dans laquelle il vit, souligne qu'il y est symbolisé dans son aspect de divinité aquatique. Cette interprétation est renforcée par le fait que l'image du personnage humain aux jambes de silure sur les pots «ikoko» est fréquemment accompagnée par celle de serpents, qui sont les messagers traditionnels des divinités de l'eau comme Erinle et Oṣun. On trouve d'ailleurs sur les autels de Ṣango aussi des pots en terre cuite consacrés à Oṣun. Comme ami de Ṣango Erinle n'est pas d'abord célébré dans sa qualité d'habitant de la brousse (qui dépend donc d'Ogun) d'une part, et d'autre part, il est alors considéré comme un messager à cause de ses qualités amphibiques de roi qui vit dans l'eau.

Tout va comme si le complexe symbolique du silure est absent dans les sanctuaires d'Erinle pour deux raisons. D'abord parce que le souvenir de son existence dans la brousse — où il n'était ni roi ni ancêtre, mais bien le médecin encore invoqué par ses adorateurs — reste vivant dans son culte sous la forme de bâtons en fer forgé, de bracelet-gourmette en fer et de chasse-mouches. Ensuite parce que dans son culte il n'est pas vénéré comme un ancêtre de rois et comme fondateur d'une communauté de vivants. En s'associant à Ṣango ces deux éléments, qui l'empêchent d'être figuré par des symboles siluriques, s'estompent, mais par là même, Erinle perd son indépendance et ne reste rien d'autre qu'un aspect de Ṣango.

6. *Conclusions*

— L'iconographie d'Erinle est constituée par deux systèmes symboliques, l'un de la brousse, l'autre de l'eau. Dans son culte

ces deux systèmes se renforcent: le médecin qui habite la brousse collabore avec le dieu d'eau qui procure des enfants.

— En dehors de la décoration des couvercles des pots «awo-oto-erinlẹ» aucun élément isolé de l'iconographie d'Erinlẹ n'est spécifique pour son culte; c'est leur combinaison et le contexte qui leur confèrent une signification précise.

— En dehors de son culte Erinlẹ est figuré soit comme un éléphant, soulignant son séjour dans la brousse, soit comme un silure ou un personnage aux jambes de silure, soulignant sa qualité de roi résidant dans l'eau.

Les symboles siluriques assimilent Erinlẹ à Ṣango par le truchement des épouses de ce dernier qui sont toutes des divinités d'eau.

Le fait que le complexe symbolique du silure comporte un élément qui renvoie aux ancêtres des rois entraîne la conséquence que ces symboles ne peuvent représenter Erinlẹ que si ce dernier est assimilé à un fondateur de communauté humaine; cette possibilité lui est offerte par son ami Ṣango.

— Le silure et le personnage aux jambes de silure qui figurent dans l'iconographie des Ogboni, d'Ifa, d'Odudua et d'Erinlẹ/Ṣango, renvoient aux ancêtres des rois et aux autres messagers ou représentants des forces de l'eau. La signification de ces images est trop spécifique pour qu'elles puissent figurer dans n'importe quel culte (comme c'est le cas pour les statues de cavalier et de la femme à la coupe de cola) et trop générale pour signifier un dieu bien défini. En outre les symboles siluriques visent d'abord un ancêtre/fondateur d'une communauté humaine, tandis que dans son propre culte n'est célébrée que sa divinité.

Museum Kamstraat 55,   HANS WITTE
NL-6522 GB Nijmegen

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AYODHYĀ: A HINDU JERUSALEM

*An Investigation of 'Holy War' as a Religious Idea
in the Light of Communal Unrest in India**

HANS BAKKER

Summary

This article discusses the concept of 'holy war' and the religious ideas it implies. According to some these ideas are characteristic of monotheistic traditions. The author investigates recent developments in Hinduism and comes to the conclusion that some of these characteristics are coming to the fore in modern forms of the Hindu religion that have strong bonds with fundamentalist movements. The question of the mosque occupying the holy spot in Ayodhyā, which is considered as the birth-spot of Viṣṇu's incarnation as Rāma, plays a central role in these developments. 'Liberation' of this site has many features in common with the motif of liberating Jerusalem in the age of the crusades. The author concludes by remarking that, though Hinduism has proved in the past to be a religion not prone to holy wars, recent developments in Indian society have made the prospect of a holy war between Hindus and Muslims seem only too real and close.

Since the cultural discovery of India in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Indian culture and society have been widely regarded as more than ordinarily pacifistic and moral. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), for example, speaks of the brahmins as a 'gentle race of men,' 'happy lambs' whose idea of God is 'great and beautiful' and whose 'morals are pure and lofty' (Bakker 1988: 99). This idealized image was enhanced in the twentieth century by the manner in which India freed itself from colonial rule; the non-violent resistance that Mahatma Gandhi both preached and practised. On the other hand, as every student of India knows, there have been few periods, even up to the present century, during which the South-Asian sub-continent has been free of war. And this fact seems to have been accepted by the Indians themselves as more or less in the natural order of things. Until the establishment and enforcement of the *pax Britannica*, the waging of wars against rival rulers was generally regarded as one of the natural political tasks of kings and the aristocracy.[1]

How is this contradiction to be explained, and how has the image of a peaceful and peace-loving India managed to remain prevalent in the face of the historical facts? The answers to these questions should probably be sought in the first place in the ambivalent attitude towards violence and the use of force found in India's own culture and world-view. This ambivalence may be seen as an inevitable product of the tension between conflicting traditional values,[2] which on the one hand sanctioned countless armed conflicts yet on the other hand never seems to have directly involved Hinduism in the start of a war.[3] Not surprisingly then, several scholars have excluded India from the scope of their investigations into 'holy war.' These scholars regard the pluriformity of polytheism as the main reason that Hinduism appears to differ fundamentally from the monotheistic (semitic) religions as to the legitimization of the use of force for religious aims.[4] We shall refer to this theory as the 'polytheism thesis.'

Holy war as a religious idea

On the eve of the deadline of the UN's ultimatum to Irak (15 January 1991) the British prime minister John Major declares in the House of Commons that the now inevitable war is a 'just' one. At the same time Saddam Hussein calls on all Muslims to fight under Irak's banner, as it leads them on to a 'holy war,' *jihād*, to be fought by 'believers' against 'infidels.'

It cannot but be noted that both speeches make use of concepts developed during the early Middle Ages in the two great monotheistic traditions, which apparently still retain some currency, and indeed evocative force. In the predominantly secular society of late twentieth century England a summons to a 'holy war' would hardly have an effect, except to provoke ridicule and suspicion. Instead, we find an appeal to a concept first developed by St. Augustine, namely that of a *bellum justum* ('just war'), which can be shown to be the source of the idea of a crusade.[5] Saddam Hussein's proclamation of a *jihād* has almost equally venerable precedents. The aim of summoning 'believers' to a holy war against 'infidels' is to mobilize the strength and motivation of the faithful in a military enterprise, to suppress fear of physical danger, and to

encourage actions which frequently are opposed to the direct per-
sonal interests of the individual.

Such declarations and exhortations on both sides are clearly
primarily intended to raise morale among both soldiers and
civilians. In other words, their value is chiefly propagandistic, and
this is certainly an important aspect of the phenomenon of holy
war. It would however be a serious mistake to imagine that this
alone could provide a full or adequate explanation of the
phenomenon. It is necessary to ask a more fundamental question:
why is it that the call to a holy war has any stimulating or pro-
paganda effect in the first place? To answer this we will have to
investigate problems in the field of religious studies: what are the
religious ideas and beliefs of the 'believer' to whom such a call is
directed, and what framework of action is directly associated with
them?

When a modern researcher of war and peace, the polemologist
Hylke Tromp, concludes that we should forget about 'the faith,
ideology and sacred fire' of soldiers on the field of battle because
they only 'go forward because they have no alternative if they do
not want to lose the respect of others and their own selfrespect'
(Tromp 1991), this may seem to suggest that cultural
anthropological questions and questions such as posed in the
previous paragraph are irrelevant. However, the self-image which
determines the content and force of this 'respect of others and self-
respect' is in fact the product of the individualization of the cultural
and religious values of the society which the soldier is called upon
to fight for.[6] It is this self-image that war-propaganda aims at
building up and strengthening, in order to break down any innate
repugnance against killing fellow men.[7] To understand what
ultimately motivates the individual soldier to place his duty as
soldier above personal safety it is necessary to focus on the social,
cultural and—in the case of holy wars—particularly the religious
values and symbols which constitute this self-image.

Fear and violence are universal basic experiences and thus impor-
tant constituents of all religions (von Stietencron 1979). But this has
not always resulted in them giving rise to collective violence sanc-
tioned by religion. What then specifically distinguishes holy wars
from war in general?

As has been noted above, some scholars have seen the answer to this question in some common element of the three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Significantly, Colpe does not consider Hinduism at all in his two articles *Zur Bezeichnung und Bezeugung des Heiligen Krieges* (1984), while as to the polytheism thesis he remarks with reference to ancient Greek history that:

> Da, wo innerhalb eines polytheistischen Systems Götter Kriege führen, [...], da verbleibt der Heiligkeitscharakter ausschließlich ihnen und teilt sich dem Kriege nicht mit; wo dies nicht der Fall ist, kann der Krieg heilig genannt werden. (Colpe 1984: 199).

Similarly, in his *Krieg, Sieg und die olympischen Götter der Griechen*, Burkert has stated with regard to the polytheistic structure of Greek religion:

> Auch wenn die Städte je ihre Stadtgottheit haben, so sind diese Götter doch 'vielverehrt,' haben an vielen Orten ihre Heiligtümer; keine Stadt kann sich auch auf die Götter ganz verlassen; ein Gott behält es sich vor, für welche Seite im Krieg er Stellung nimmt [...] man sieht nicht sich selbst als die allein Bestätigten, Bevorzugten, die Auserwählten eines 'heiligen Kriegs.'[8]

Although the term 'holy war' (*hieròs pólemos*) seems to have been used first by the Greeks, they appear to have meant something quite different from the phenomena we are concerned with here (Brodersen 1991).

As is clear from a glance at the literature on this subject, especially Colpe's work, the definition of 'holy war' itself is considerably problematic. Agreement may be reached easily enough on the meaning of the word 'war' but 'holy' and the idea of 'holiness' have been understood in very different ways by various scholars. Kippenberg (1991a) has pointed out that 'the word "holy" should be freed from its connotations of irrationality, with which especially R. Otto has associated it, and should rather be connected with "the uncommon" ("nicht-alltägliche") in contrast with "the common" ("alltägliche") (M. Weber), and with "collective" in contrast with "individual" (E. Durkheim).' By such a definition all wars are 'holy,' and in view of the large number of wars which have taken place on the South-Asian sub-continent, the polytheism thesis

would have to be considered to be directly refuted. On the other hand, the historical material definitely suggests that holy wars form a separate category, and for heuristic reasons too it seems desirable to narrow the scope of our definition in some way.

The narrowest definition of a 'holy war' would be a war waged in the name of God by people who believe that by doing so they fulfil His will and carry out His plan. Some of the Christian crusades may be taken as examples of such wars. The *deus vult* of Pope Urban II's address in Clermont in AD 1095, and the consequence of this 'will' are well known. However, it seems questionable whether the Islamic *jihād* can in all circumstances be comprised within this definition.[9] A compromise, which comes close to the ordinary usage of the term and seems at least to provide a working definition with some heuristic value, is to define those wars as 'holy' in which religious or pseudo-religious concepts play a dominant role; i.e., armed conflicts in which a major appeal is made to the religious convictions of the combatants, in which (at least) one side claims possession of absolute theological truth and which is fought with the conviction that this truth must be victorious, for the greater glory of God and for the weal of mankind.

In this connection five conditions for religiously motivated violence formulated by H. von Stietencron (1974: 334) appear to be relevant. The first of these is the belief of the side that knows God to be with it in its own superiority—frequently this may apply to both parties. An extreme case of such a conviction is the idea of a 'chosen people' as found for instance in the school of the *Deuteronomium* (7:1-5, 20:16). Research carried out since von Rad's *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (1952) has, however, demonstrated that the kinds of warfare, including the 'ban-practice' (*ḥērem*), preached in the Laws of War (Deut. 20), were also known in Assyria, and in fact were common practices of war in ancient times.[10] The notion of being 'the Lord's chosen people' too is found not only in Judaism; it was used, for instance, in Calvinistic propaganda during the Dutch-Spanish Eighty Years War (Huussen 1991).

One condition for holy wars thus would appear to be the notion of exclusivity which attributes absolute status to one's own beliefs.

At the same time the opponent, who is fighting against the good, is demonized, that is, seen as a threatening embodiment of evil. Religions which develop such dyadic concepts and can sanction wars as 'holy,' are in consequence confronted with the problem of the theodicy; the vindication of the existence of evil in the world.

Two of the conditions formulated by von Stietencron do not appear to be necessary conditions for a holy war: namely the belief that there is no second earthly existence ('Einmaligkeit des Lebens'), and the 'close connection between religion and secular violence.' The latter should probably be regarded as concomitant rather than conditional.[11] Another condition should however be mentioned, which undoubtedly plays a central role; namely that of 'community.' The importance of this factor can only be realized when we consider religions such as Hinduism that place little explicit emphasis on the 'community of believers' and do not have the kind of organisational structure necessary to form such a community.

The common acceptance of an exclusive truth unites believers into a community. Each member of such a community considers himself as taking part in a *summum bonum* that transcends individuality. In situations of crisis, such as a war, this can lead to the member of the community giving up his life for the common good. Martyrdom is always founded on such feelings of community.[12] Kippenberg has rightly emphasized that martyrdom and holy war are related themes; the concept of a 'holy war' would not be complete without the idea of meritorious and exemplary suffering of the just (Kippenberg 1991a). On the other hand it must be noted that the presence of these conditions does not necessarily lead to 'holy' wars, as is shown for instance by the fact that the crusades were legitimized by the Roman Catholic but not by the Orthodox Church (Palmer 1991).

The Hindu religion and the social reality of war

To pursue our investigation into collective religious violence in the historical and contemporary reality of South Asia, in relation to Hinduism, it is necessary to introduce a chronological differentiation. Early Hinduism, before Muslim dominance (c. AD 1200),

unquestionably taught an absolute truth as the basis of the entire universe and the final aim of all living beings. However, as argued by Hacker (1983), this truth had a diffuse, all pervasive, inclusive ('inklusivistisch') nature and was thus the opposite of exclusive. God transcends the world but is simultaneously omnipresent in it. Such a world-view can have no fundamental opposition between good and evil. This characteristic of early Indian thought can be illustrated by a passage from *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 3.1:

> Indra said to him: Know me alone; for I hold this alone to be the most beneficial thing for a man, that he should know me. I slew the three-headed son of Tvaṣṭar. I gave the Arunmukha ascetics to the hyenas. After breaking many promises, in heaven I crushed the Prahlādīyas, in the sky the Paulomas and on earth the Kālakhañjas. Yet not one hair of mine (having done this) was destroyed. And no hair will be destroyed of him who knows me, by any deed; not because of theft, not because of infanticide, not because of matricide and not because of patricide. Even if he commits evil, the colour does not leave his face.[13]

This viewpoint is connected with a totally different concept of time from that found in the semitic religions. The infinity of time is regarded as cyclic, and the notion of a final period in which the highest divine aim shall be realized and towards which the history of mankind tends (a *civitas dei*) is practically absent. From a divine standpoint, *sub specie aeternitatis*, worldly activity is a spectacle (*tamāśa*), a drama, the play (*līlā*) of God. In such a view there is no place for martyrdom. Individual self-sacrifice, which is of course as common in India as elsewhere, yields in the first place benefits for the same individual in an ensuing existence. The hypocrisy of martyrdom (described by von Stietencron (1979: 330) as 'besondere Raffinesse') which conceals the egotistical desire for the martyr's crown in the hereafter under altruistic motives of self-sacrifice for a common goal, the weal of all, is not found in Hinduism, at least in the early period. Hinduism is a religion which in the first place aims at individual liberation, and only to a far lesser extent than the semitic religions unites believers into a single community.[14] This may perhaps be connected with the fact that a plurality of deities is worshipped, but this connection does not appear to me to be intrinsic. It is clear that, also in the early period, a deep conviction

of a single, all-compassing and absolute divinity underlies this outward polytheism.[15] We shall investigate whether a change has recently been taking place in regard to this last point. For it appears that a tendency can be detected among the Hindu population today to define itself as the community of Hindus, and this tendency seems to be connected with a shift in emphasis which has brought the monotheistic aspect of Hinduism to the fore and given it tangible form.

Such tendencies generally have a long history. As has been shown in Lorenzen's study, *Warrior Ascetics in Indian History* (1978), before the Muslim conquests India did not have any holy wars, either in the sense defined above or in the sense of 'wars fought by holy men.' But with the introduction of Muslim rule in North India, a change takes place, although this does not directly result in a holy war. Hindus are obstructed in the observance of their religious practices, and the religious interests vested in temples and monasteries are threatened with confiscation or destruction. At the same time the influx of Islam leads to conflicts between Hindu monks and Muslim fakirs, and the system of traditional education, which ensured the continuity of cultural and religious values, was seriously undermined. The state of affairs may be illustrated by a description of the razzia of Mahmud of Ghazni, who destroyed the great temple in Somnath (Gujarat) in AD 1024-1025.

> In the year 414AH Mahmúd captured several forts and cities in Hind, and he also took the idol called Somnát. The idol was the greatest of all the idols of Hind. Every night that there was an eclipse the Hindus went on pilgrimage to the temple, and there congregated to the number of a hundred thousand persons [...] One thousand Brahmans attended every day to perform the worship of the idol, and to introduce the visitors. Three hundred persons were employed in shaving the heads and beards of the pilgrims. Three hundred and fifty persons sang and danced at the gate of the temple. Every one of these received a settled allowance daily [...] He reached Somnát on a Thursday in the middle of Zí-l Ka'da, and there he beheld a strong fortress built upon the seashore, so that it was washed by the waves [...] Next morning, early, the Muhammadans renewed the battle, and made great havoc among the Hindús, till they drove them from the town to the house of their idol, Somnát.[16]

> It is a well-authenticated fact that when Mahmúd was about to destroy the idol, a crowd of Brahmans represented (to his nobles) that if he would desist from the mutilation they would pay several crores of gold coins into the treasury [...] Mahmúd replied: 'I know this, but I desire that on the day of resurrection I should be summoned with the words, ''Where is that Mahmúd who broke the greatest of the heathen idols?'' rather than by these: ''Where is that Mahmúd who sold the greatest of the idols to the infidels for gold?'' '[17]

> A dreadful slaughter followed at the gate of the temple. Band after band of the defenders entered the temple to Somnát, and with their hands clasped round their necks, wept and passionately entreated him. Then again they issued forth to fight until they were slain, and but few were left alive [...] This temple of Somnát was built upon fifty-six pillars of teak wood covered with lead. The idol itself was in a chamber. [Mahmúd] seized it, part of it he burnt, and part of it he carried away with him to Ghazní, where he made it a step at the entrance of the Jámi'-masjid. The worth of what was found in the temple exceeded two millions of dinars, all of which was taken. The number of slain exceeded fifty thousand.[18]

It is therefore hardly surprising that in the following centuries a number of groups of Hindus formed military organizations to defend such religious interests. However, significantly enough this process only appears to have taken place among groups which already formed a religious community, namely various orders of ascetics or monastery-orders. Of course these were also the groups whose direct interests were particularly threatened. Resistance was naturally also offered by the Hindu kingdoms, but the resultant conflicts did not essentially differ from early wars between Hindu rulers themselves, as may also be illustrated by the fact that many Hindus served in the armies commanded by and fighting for Muslims. It is important to note that there never was a popular Hindu uprising against the new Muslim rule. The lack of unity within the Hindu world is even more apparent from the reports that have come down to us of the actions of these militarized orders. The earliest battle known to us in which armed religious ascetics took part, in Thanesar, AD 1567, was between two Hindu orders, and was motivated not by a desire to protect Hindu religious values but rather to secure the interests of one order against claims of a rival

group (Lorenzen 1978: 69). Abu-l Fazl has given us an eyewitness account in his *Akbar Nāma.*

> There are two parties among the Sanyāsīs (i.e., Śaiva ascetics): one is called Kur, and the other Pūrī. A quarrel arose among these two about the place of sitting. The asceticism of most of these men arises from the world's having turned its back on them, and not from their having become coldhearted to the world. Consequently they are continually distressed and are overcome of lust and wrath, and covetousness. The cause of the quarrel was that the Pūrī sect had a fixed place on the bank of the tank where they sate and spread the net of begging. The pilgrims from the various parts of India who came there to bathe in the tank used to give them alms. On that day the Kur faction had come there in a tyrannical way and taken the place of the Pūrīs, and the latter were unable to maintain their position against them [...] The two sides drew up in line, and first one man on each side advanced in a braggart fashion, and engaged with swords. Afterwards bows and arrows were used. After that the Pūrīs attacked the Kurs with stones [...] The Kurs could not withstand them and fled. The Pūrīs pursued them and sent a number of the wretches to annihilation.[19]

It is therefore clear that the case of these militarized ascetic orders falls under the first type of movement differentiated by Lorenzen (1978: 63), namely 'a movement concerned with the protection of specific, local economic and social interests and privileges.' A larger framework which could have mobilized the Hindus as a single community against the new Muslim rule simply did not exist.

The segregation of the Hindu and Muslim communities

To trace developments further we will now turn to a particular religious centre, situated centrally in North India: the city Ayodhyā. The sacredness of this city was (and is) founded on the belief that in the far distant past the god Viṣṇu was born there as the son of king Daśaratha. This particular incarnation of Viṣṇu is named Rāma. This belief belongs to the cultural inheritance of every Hindu. The story of Viṣṇu's *avatāra* as Rāma is told in the ancient Sanskrit epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, as well as in countless later, vernacular versions. The figure of Rāma has developed into the

archetype of the just king in Indian culture, the ruler who brings happiness and prosperity to all his subjects. He is introduced in the *Rāmāyaṇa* 1.1.2-4 as follows:

> Who is there in this world today who is virtuous? Who is mighty (heroic), knows the *dharma*, is grateful (*kṛtajña*), speaks the truth and firmly keeps his vows? Who is possessed of good conduct, and who is well-disposed towards all living beings? Who is wise, who is skilful, and who alone is beautiful to behold? Who is self-controlled and has conquered (his) wrath; who is wise and free from envy? For whom do (even) the gods feel fear when his fury is roused in battle?

The answer to all these questions is of course Rāma. His rule, popularly called *Rāma rājya*, as depicted in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and later literature, represents the ideal society, and Rāma himself personifies simultaneously the ideal king and God. The sixteenth century *Rāmacaritamānasa* describes his divine reign thus:

> When Rāma sat upon his sovereign throne, the three spheres rejoiced and there was no more sorrow. No man was any other's enemy, and under Rāma's royal influence all ill-feeling was laid aside. Everyone devoted himself to his duty in accordance with his caste and stage of life, and ever found happiness in treading the Vedic path. Fear and sorrow and sickness were no more [...] Sole monarch of the land engirdled by seven seas was Raghupati (i.e., Rāma) in Kosala—no great dominion for him in each of whose several hairs dwelt many a universe. [...] The bliss and prosperity of Rāma's realm neither Serpent King nor Sarasvatī can describe. All who dwelt therein were generous and charitable and did humble service to the Brāhmans. Each husband was true to one wife, and each wife was loyal to her husband in thought and word and deed.[20]

As I have attempted to demonstrate elsewhere, the religious cult of this incarnation of Viṣṇu only assumes significant proportions in the period that saw the forces of Islam threatening to destroy Hindu society, many centuries after the formation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself (Bakker 1986; 1987). It is only in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that Ayodhyā develops into a pilgrimage-centre in which the spot where Rāma was born, the Rāmajanmabhūmi, is the main attraction. A coincidence? Or is there some intrinsic connection between the Muslim invasions and the rise in importance of this god-king

as a symbol for traditional Hindu values? In any case, there can be no doubt that as the time-honoured model of justice (*dharma*) and regal fame and power (*kṣatra*), Rāma was remarkably well suited to develop into a symbol of the struggle against the forces that threatened traditional Hindu society and values.[21] It is not possible to go further into this problem here; for our present purpose it is sufficient to remark that in the course of the second millennium Rāma, together with his birth-place Ayodhyā, came to occupy an increasingly important and central role in Hinduism.

Now until the end of Great Moghul rule, that is to say till the beginning of the eighteenth century, Ayodhyā was the capital of one of the provinces of the Muslim empire in North India. In consequence, Hindu sects had few rights to defend in the city. Pilgrimage was tolerated, but the cream of the profits from it was taken by the Muslim rulers in the form of a tax on pilgrims. It was forbidden to build temples or monasteries of more than a certain dimension in the city, and the existing temples fell into decay and disappeared or were replaced by mosques. The latter took place with the temple on the supposed spot of Rāma's birth, dating from the early eleventh century. This small temple was replaced by a mosque, the Babri Masjid, in AD 1528, during the reign of the first Moghul emperor, Babur,[22] a deed which was to have far-reaching consequences.

After the death of Aurangzeb in AD 1707, central Muslim rule in North India was weakened to such an extent that regional and local rulers could found small independent kingdoms. Ayodhyā becomes the capital of the virtually independent kingdom Avadh, ruled by the former governor of the Moghul province, the nawab Saadat Khan, a Shiite Muslim of Persian descent. However, the power of the rulers of Avadh has been weakened so much that the execution of their authority comes to lie more and more in the hands of allied Hindu leaders and large landowners. Even the military power of the Islamic nawabs of Avadh is partly dependent on the services of Hindu ascetics.[23] The logical outcome of this situation is that Muslim authority loses its control over the activities in and around the Hindu holy places. The organization and management of the birth-city of Rāma come into the hands of orders of Hindu monks,

who do not hesitate to use force to drive each other from the most lucrative spots. A Vaiṣṇava source describes the situation as follows:

> At that time [...] when the occasion of Rāma's birth came, people went to Kosalapur (i.e., Ayodhyā) and assembled there—who can describe the enormous crowd? At that place there was an unlimited (number of) strong warriors in *saṃnyāsin* garb, carrying weapons, with matted hair and ashes smeared on every limb—an unlimited army of soldiers taking pleasure in battle. Fighting with the *vairāgins* broke out. This fight was of no avail (to the *vairāgins*), owing to lack of strategy. [...] They made a mistake by going there towards them; the *vairāgin* garb became a source of misery. All people dressed in *vairāgin* garb fled—through fear of them (scil., *saṃnyāsins*) Avadhpur was abandoned. Wherever they (scil. *saṃnyāsins*) happened to find people in *vairāgin* garb, there they struck great fear into them. Through fear of them everyone was frightened and wherever they could they took shelter in a secret place and hid themselves. They changed their dress and hid their sectarian markings—no one showed his proper identity.[24]

Inevitably, the Vaiṣṇava orders arm themselves too. The resultant military orders are organized on the model of their Śaiva counter-parts, into *akhāṛās*, 'wrestling-schools,' and during the eighteenth century their fort-like monasteries appear throughout North India. One of these orders manages to wrest the control over some of the important holy places in Ayodhyā from the Śaiva opposition. And as a reward for services rendered to the nawab of Avadh—a Shiite, as remarked above—the Vaiṣṇavas are even granted permission to build a fort-monastery at a mere 700 meters distance from the Babri Masjid. This so-called 'Fort of Hanumān,' the Hanumāngaṛhī, has remained the most important and frequently visited monastery-cum-temple in Ayodhyā until the present time.

For our subject, it is important to keep in mind that even in this period of religious turmoil and anarchy the conflict still remains internal, and is limited to certain local centres. There still is no common Hindu attack on the strongholds of Islam, as represented for instance by the Babri Masjid on Rāma's Birth-spot (*rāmajan-mabhūmi*). It is true that religious interests and emotions play a major part in these conflicts, but the fight is hardly, if at all,

inspired by religious ideology. Nor is there as yet any mobilization of the large mass of the Hindu population which did not belong to any organisation of ascetics or monks.

It is interesting to observe that as official Muslim authority in North India continues to weaken during the nineteenth century and grows more and more dependent on the support of the Hindu aristocracy, the originally political contrast between Muslim rulers and Hindu subjects changes in character and focus and begins to take the form of a religious conflict which both sides attempt to decide in their own favour by any means, including the use of force. It should of course be remembered that by that time the Muslim segment of the population is not only to be found among the ruling classes, but that large groups from especially the lowest strata of Hindu society had converted to Islam. This new development, the religious conflict that was to take on such important and threatening dimensions in the history of South Asia in the twentieth century, both under British rule and in the post-colonial period, can again be particularly clearly illustrated and traced with reference to the events in Ayodhyā.

On the eve of Britain's annexation of Avadh, with the ruler of Avadh, the Shiite Wajid Ali Shah, already no more than a puppet for the British, groups of Sunnis rise in protest against the permissive attitude of their Islamic government. They demand to be allowed to build a mosque on the site of the Hanumāngaṛhī (Bhatnagar 1968: 117ff.). Inevitably, this results in a direct conflict with the ascetics of the fort-monastery. Despite attempts by British troops, with the sanction of Wajid Ali Shah, to separate the combatants, heavy fighting breaks out between the Hindus and the Muslims, and the Muslims are forced to retreat into the Babri Masjid on Rāma's Birth-spot. The Hindus storm the mosque and seventy Muslims are killed, after which Hindu wrath turns against the Muslim population of the city and leads to large-scale plundering.

Large numbers of Muslims, led by fanatic mullahs, gather from all parts of Avadh and proclaim *jihād* against the Hindus of Ayodhyā. Feelings run high, and the situation grows even more explosive—partly because the Hindus slaughter a number of pigs on the day of the burial of the Muslims who died in the Babri

Masjid—and this results in the first direct confrontation between Hindu and Muslim populations as such.

The Islamic campaign sets out from Lucknow, the new capital of Avadh, under command of the maulvi Amir-ud-din alias Amir Ali, who is hailed as the fifth imam. Despite desperate attempts on the part of Wajid Ali Shah, who has the *jihād* pronounced unlawful by both a Shiite and a Sunna court, Amir Ali continues his march, leaving a wake of destruction. But before this mob reaches Ayodhyā, they are intercepted by government troops under British command. Consultations ensue with the lawful Muslim authorities in Lucknow, in the course of which the British far-sightedly point out that if the rebellious Muslims were after all to be permitted to build their mosque on the site of the Hanumāngarhī, chaos would immediately result, with the Hindus in their turn claiming their rights to the holy places now occupied by mosques in Ayodhyā, Benares etc. But the consultations and all attempts at negotiation yield no result, and finally the *jihād* of Amir Ali ends before the British cannon of captain Barlow. Four or five hundred Muslims perish, Amir Ali among them. Two months later, in February 1857, Avadh is annexed by the English, who promptly erect a wall and fence around the Babri Masjid.[25]

This harrowing episode clearly shows that large-scale conflicts between Hindus and Muslims do not directly spring from the historical situation of an Islamic ruling class and an oppressed Hindu population. The religious conflict only takes the form of popular movements when Muslim authority is about to topple and both segments of the population attempt to take the law into their own hands. With the restoration of government control and the emergence of the modern state, these movements subsequently become increasingly directed against public authority, which they try to undermine, no matter whether this authority is exercised by British colonial power or the democratically chosen government of the Republic of India.[26]

From a core of a small number of fanatic Sunni mullahs and trained Hindu ascetics, the awareness of being a group with common religious beliefs that differ fundamentally from those of the opposing group spreads out among both the Hindu and Muslim popula-

tion during the nineteenth and twentieth century. In other words, the feeling of 'community' arose also within the Hindu population, stimulated, among other things, by the regularly recurrent conflicts around the spot of Rāma's birth, the Babri Masjid. An additional factor was that in accordance with British colonial policy the Hindus were now officially defined as a separate category from the Muslim segment of the population. In connection with the colonial census reports, the individual citizen was compelled, for the first time in the history of India, to explicitly state whether he was of the Hindu or Muslim faith. The combination of such factors meant that Hindus of all castes and sects were forced to reflect on what made them Hindus and distinguished them from their Islamic fellow citizens.[27]

With the restoration of central rule by the colonial authorities, the role of the armed Hindu ascetics was greatly diminished. Some of them served as mercenaries in the colonial army, and some were of assistance to the authorities in times of crisis, such as the Mutiny of 1857 (Fyz.Gaz.163), but they played no further important role as a military power. Instead one could say that their militant character gradually spread out over the Hindu population in general. The most gruesome consequence of this development (so far at least) took place during the period of de-colonization, when the empire of British India fell apart into two states; the secular state of India and the Islamic Pakistan. This 'partition' was accompanied by massacres, carried out by both sides, which are estimated to have cost half a million lives. But even after the secession of Pakistan some 40 million Muslims remained inhabitants of the state of India; a number which had already doubled in 1981. At present the Muslims comprise 12% of the total population of India. Since the secession India has fought two wars with Pakistan, and the present unrest in Kashmir could be the prelude of a third. Nonetheless such wars between states, fought over territorial disputes, should probably not be called 'holy wars,' also because Hindus, Muslims and even Sikhs have fought on both sides in them.

Ayodhyā: a Hindu Jerusalem

For our present subject it is more fruitful to look at the current situation in India - which, it must not be forgotten, is a secular

state. This situation is characterized by the disintegration of the population into several sections whose identity is chiefly based on religious beliefs. This is generally referred to as 'communalism;' it may be compared with the phenomenon of 'segregation' ('verzuiling') in twentieth century Dutch society. In regard to the Muslim segment, the world-wide tendency towards fundamentalism has undoubtedly played a role in India too. Numerous accusations have been made by the Hindus that Islamic organizations in India are being financially supported by the rich Arab oil producing nations. Another danger is of course seen in Pakistan, which is said to aim at destabilizing India via the Islamic population; particularly by fanning the flames of Sihk violence in Punjab and, most recently, by causing the turmoil in Kashmir. These geo-political factors have no doubt strengthened the self-awareness of the Hindus as forming one community. A common ideology, which could (and increasingly does) unite the still largely fragmentary Hindu population under a single banner, has been developed on the basis of the mythology of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

In this ideology, Rāma is the deity who in the past created and ruled the ideal state here on earth. Through the inevitable process of historical decline, this state has since disappeared, but can, if all Hindus were to unite in working towards it, be recreated in the future. This new utopic reign, the *Rāma rājya*, which will of course encompass only the Hindu faithful, may be compared with the eschatological ideal of the *civitas dei* reified in the reconquered earthly Jerusalem.[28] For the Hindu believer of the present, a holy place like Ayodhyā or Braj (associated with Viṣṇu's incarnation as Kṛṣṇa) is more than a sacred remembrance of the past; it is an actual hierophany of the paradise of Viṣṇu/Rāma. The holy spots in Ayodhyā represent the manifest (*prakaṭa*) forms of transcendent (*aprakaṭa*) archetypes in the paradise Vaikuṇṭha. The occupation of the central and most holy site by a mosque is therefore a direct encroachment on the holy or divine itself. From such a point of view, the fight for control of Rāma's Birth-spot can be seen as a divine fight. A historical religious ideal is transformed into a political programme.[29]

The ideology which aims at restoring Rāma's rule in its pure form by eliminating the profane encroachments on it has become

a politic factor of increasing importance, particularly in North
India, where the oppositions between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs
are most deeply felt, and where, as we have seen, the historical
developments took place which gave the Hindu community its
cohesion. This ideology is connected with the attempts on the part
of fundamentalist Hindu groups, such as the Rastriya
Svayamsevak Sangh (RSS), to make India a national Hindu state
(*Hindū Rāṣṭra*), just as Pakistan is an Islamic state and Khalistan a
wished-for Sikh state.[30] On the religious level this ideology has led
to the monotheistic aspect of Hinduism being articulated and
assuming tangible, personal form, embodied as Rāma. It is in this
light that the exorbitant success of the recent *Rāmāyaṇa* television
series should be seen. This series enthralled the Hindu population
to such an extent that riots broke out when power-failures inter-
rupted television-reception, and a television-station was stormed
when the series (already stretched as far as human ingenuity could
manage) finally came to an end without a sequel, 'the later deeds
of Rāma' (a kind of *Uttararāmacarita*) being announced.

As the re-capture of Jerusalem was the central theme in the
ideology of the Christian crusades, so the re-possessing of Rāma's
Birth-spot, the Rāmajanmabhūmi, gradually came to be central in
this newly developed Hindu ideology.[31]

As we have seen, after the annexation of Avadh the English
erected a fence around the Babri Masjid to prevent Hindus and
Muslims from fighting over the spot. This policy was continued by
the government of independent India. Hindus and Muslims alike
were prohibited from entering the mosque. It is neither possible nor
necessary to discuss all the incidents that took place around this
holy spot in the last hundred years. It should however be mentioned
that in 1949, in the aftermath of the partition, the Hindus suc-
ceeded in installing an image of Rāma and his wife Sītā inside the
mosque. As may be understood, this again led to serious riots
between the Muslims and Hindus, and numerous legal actions
were undertaken by both sides. The judge finally decreed that
during the lengthy process of legal settlement the mosque should
remain closed. In this way all goes relatively well until 1984.

In that year the fundamentalist Hindu organization Visva Hindu

Parisad (VHP), a sister organization of the RSS, starts a new campaign to 'liberate' the Birth-spot of Rāma, that is to say, to pull down the mosque and replace it by a large Hindu temple.[32] This movement scores its first success in 1986, when a clever lawyer from the neighbouring city of Faizabad procures a court judgement which declares the closure of the mosque to be legally unfounded. The gate of the fence is opened, and a stream of Hindus enters the mosque to worship the idol of Rāma which has remained there all these years. As may be imagined, with the VHP growing more and more succesful and winning more and more adherents, a large number of politicians seek to connect themselves with this popular movement. In particular, right-wing Hindu politicians united in the Indian People's Party (BJP) expect—rightly, as has since emerged—to be swept to political power on the shoulders of this mass-movement. On the Muslim side, a national action committee is started to protect the Babri Masjid. The ruling Congress Party of Rajiv Gandhi, which traditionally is dependent to a high degree on votes of the Islamic section of the population, desperately tries to avoid the looming Scylla and Charybdis by portraying itself as the defender of India as a secular and united state. This tight-rope feat becomes increasingly difficult, however, as the polarization of Hindus and Muslims continues.

In the election-year 1989 the VHP, supported by the politicians of the BJP, make a brilliant move. In order to mobilise as large a mass of Hindus as possible for the 'liberation' of Rāma's birth-spot, a new campaign to replace the mosque by a temple is launched. The model for this was Somnath, where, after the destruction of the Hindu temple by Mahmud of Ghazni, and despite the razing of later rebuildings by the Muslim rulers, a large Hindu temple had recently been erected. The idea behind the campaign was that action committees should be formed in all cities and villages with more than two thousand inhabitants, to consecrate a number of bricks in accordance with Vedic ritual. These bricks, consecrated in long and elaborate ceremonies (always something capable of rousing Hindu enthusiams), should then be brought in procession to Ayodhyā, and, after much orthodox ceremony surrounding the laying of the first stone on the site of the mosque, should then be used to build the new temple. This campaign may be said to have been largely successful.

When I visited India in the autumn of 1989, the election-campaign was in full swing, and the disputed Babri Masjid in Ayodhyā had become its central and dominant theme. The leaders of the Indian People's Party openly backed the brick-campaign of the VHP. All over the country bricks were being consecrated with much pomp and ceremony. The processions bearing the consecrated bricks often passed through districts and villages inhabited by Muslims, and this frequently led to bloody riots. Rajiv Gandhi's ruling Congress Party was put under so much pressure that it finally gave in and gave permission for the first stone of the planned temple to be laid on 9 November, 60 meters in front of the gate of the mosque. A total of 300,000 consecrated bricks streamed into Ayodhyā, and hundreds of people died, frequently in horrific fashion, in the ensuing violence. A curfew was imposed in many places, including Benares. Hindu youths marched provocatively through the streets, chanting slogans like the following:

> That Hindu whose blood does not boil has water in his veins,
> youth that does not serve Rāmajanmabhūmi is youth lived in vain.[33]

An illustration of the clashes that resulted is provided by the occurances in Bhagalpur, a fairly ordinary village in Bihar, as reported in the Indian press (*Hitavada* 19-11-1989):

> It was Friday, October 27: the Muslims had just said their prayers in the newly built makeshift mosque when they found themselves surrounded from all sides by fierce mobs. One pretext trotted up by them was the presence of a Rajpur imam to read the *namāz*. 'Why bring an outsider,' they asked. The Muslims explained there was nobody educated enough in the village to preside over the Friday prayers, but the mob wouldn't listen. The scared Muslims gathered in the house of Minnat Mian, the only building without a thatched roof that would not collapse when torched. Later in the afternoon, the local head of police along with some policemen made their appearance and assured them safety.
> Meanwhile, houses in the Muslim quarter had begun being set ablaze with both sides exchanging brickbats. 'My hands were aching, we had hurled so many stones,' recalled Suleiman.
> When night fell, the stone throwing stopped but the houses continued to burn. Suleiman and a few others managed to escape to Rajpur but the rest stayed put in Minnat Mian's house. One escapee was killed,

but late in the evening an army contigent arrived. The army officer personally counted the number of people sheltering in the house and handed over charge to the local policemen, leaving word that he would return next morning to remove them elsewhere. When he did, almost all of them were dead. It was the silence of the graveyard.

Fundamentalist organizations sanction the use of force on the part of the Hindus. A statement is issued saying that (*Hitavada* 13-11-1989):

> [the laying of the foundation stone] is the result of sacrifices made by hundreds of thousands of Hindus over centuries to redeem Ramajan-mabhumi and establish the temple. 'The restoration of the birthplace of Rama' is symbolic of re-establishment of our national pride just as the reconstruction of the great Somnath temple was.

Nor are any scruples felt about annexing and misusing, not to say abusing, the spiritual legacy of Mahatma Gandhi in support of the new ideology (*Hitavada*):

> When Mahatma Gandhi envisaged freedom, he dreamt of and defined the independence as 'Rama rajya.' His whole life was inspired by Lord Rama.[34]

The Times of India (7-11-1989) rightly remarks in a commentary that:

> There is hardly a village where the consecration of bricks for Rama's temple has not been held. And almost everywhere the ceremony has evoked a popular response. Lord Rama and his controversial birth-place is fast becoming a Hindu symbol, as no previous ones, uniting co-religionists accross caste barriers.

In the elections of late November 1989 the Congress Party is defeated. Particularly in North India, where the new Hindu move-ment was most successful, the opposition inflicts a crushing defeat on Rajiv Gandhi's party. The Indian People's Party BJP rockets from 2 to 88 seats in the newly elected Loksabhā (parliament). This trend is continued in the state-elections in early March 1990: the BJP even acquires an absolute majority in the state-parliaments of Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

A year after the first stone of the temple on Rāma's Birth-spot was placed, the question flares up again. Hundreds of thousands of 'temple-builders' (*kār sevaks*) are called upon by the VHP and other fundamentalist Hindu groups to march on Ayodhyā. The leader of the BJP, Lal Advani, places himself at the head of this procession in 'Rāma's Vehicle' (*Rām rath*) and is promptly arrested. Tens of thousands of soldiers seal Ayodhyā off. Photos of inflamed Hindus waving flags on the domes of the Babri Masjid make the front pages of newspapers all over the world. The whole country is in the grip of the struggle around the mosque in Ayodhyā. The secular and unitary state of India seems about to founder; the population, incited by religious emotions, seems deaf to reason, and the minority-government of the People's Front (Janata Dal)—together with the BJP the main winners of the 1989 election—seems helpless and at a loss.

The BJP withdraws its support from the minority-cabinet of V.P. Singh and precipitates yet another government crisis. Like his predecessor Rajiv Gandhi, V.P. Singh had endeavoured to remain neutral in this conflict between members of two faiths, but he too is brought down by the new Hindu fundamentalism.

In December 1990 communal disturbances and riots claim hundreds of lives. Noteworthy is the fact that the disturbances clearly are spreading to the south as well. 'Temple-builders' are arrested in large numbers. Ayodhyā becomes a military fortress, and new fortifications in the shape of a wire-fence and barbed wire are placed around the mosque. The new minority-government, led by prime minister Chandra Shekhar and formed out of a faction of the Janata Dal, is completely dependent on the support of the Congress Party and seems about to fall at any moment. The idealized image referred to at the beginning of this article of a country and culture in which peace-loving tendencies are stronger than elsewhere, seems more than ever to be a mirage.

Epilogue

Our conclusions may be summarized as follows.
During a process of interaction with Islam, a new Hindu self-awareness gradually emerges, particularly in North India. This

self-awareness draws heavily on the mythological material of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The worship of Rāma as the highest, personal, God becomes ever more prominent. Hindus of other sects also increasingly partake in this movement, so that a shift in emphasis appears to take place towards the more monotheistic aspects of Hinduism. Related to this, the feeling of belonging to a single (religious) community spreads during the nineteenth and twentieth century from the militant monastery-orders to large sections of the population. The myth of King Rāma provides a new utopic ideal of a *summum bonum* here on earth: the *Rāma rājya*. The first step towards the realization of this ideal is seen in a very concrete action, which inspires violent emotions: the 'liberation' of Rāma's Birth-spot in Ayodhyā. This goal not only unites Hindus of all castes all over the country, but also provides an effective instrument to harass the Muslim population, which is regarded as the major hindrance with regard to the realization of this ideal, and as an encroachment on the holy order. The result is large-scale disturbances which result in the death of large numbers of Hindus and Muslims. By imposing strict measures the state-authorities and the central government in Delhi just manage to prevent an outright civil war.

India has known countless wars, but none of them can be called 'holy wars' in the sense defined here. The developments sketched above, however, have led to the incorporation into Hinduism of a number of elements which have been associated with the idea of a 'holy war.' These elements are: 1 the formation of an exclusive community of Hindus who share the desire for a common good; 2 a shift in religious emphasis towards a single, personal, God, Rāma; 3 a tendency to see Islam and its adherents as agents of evil (which may be described as demonization of the enemy); 4 the regading of Hindus who perish during conflicts with Muslims as victims for the common weal. The question may be asked whether Hinduism is developing into a monotheistic-like religion. As a rule historians rightly refrain from making predictions about the future, and I too will not attempt to answer this question. We may conclude then merely by remarking that, though Hinduism has proved in the past to be a religion not prone to holy wars, recent developments in Indian society unfortunately have made the prospect of a holy war between Hindus and Muslims seem only too real and close.

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¹ In the famous Indian handbook on politics, the *Arthaśāstra*, the king is regularly referred to as *vijigīṣu*, 'he who wishes to conquer,' an epithet which is not given a religious justification. The duty of the nobility (*kṣatriya*) is defined as: 'Studying (the Vedas), performing sacrifices (with the help of brahmin priests), dotation, living by arms (*śastrājīvana*), and protection of beings' (1.3.6).

² Heesterman (1985) has traced the origin of this conflict in the Indian tradition to the opposition between the Hindu ideal of world-renunciation and the reality of social conditions.

³ Cp. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (ERE) s.v. 'War' (XII: 677): 'While the Vedas are sufficiently war-like, and Brāhmanism gives a consecration to the military caste, the mild spirit of Hindu religion tended to view war under the repugnant aspect of murder.'

⁴ Burkert 1986: 81ff.; Colpe 1984; Kippenberg 1991a. Cp. also Bruce Lawrence's (1990: 107) restriction of the fundamentalist world-view to monotheistic traditions (cp. Kippenberg 1991b).

⁵ ERE s.v. 'War' (XII: 682): '[Augustine] had no difficulty in deciding that there are unjust and just wars [...] Just wars are those which are waged to inflict punishment, or to secure reparation for injury or (as in OT) by express commandment of God' (ref. to *Quaestiones in Josue* III.² 584f.). For a study of the development of the idea of a crusade from this concept cp. Vanderjagt 1991.

⁷ Cp. Mead 1964: 244f. 'The individual enters as such into his own experience only as an object, not as a subject. [...] Existence of private or 'subjective' contents of experience does not alter the fact that self-consciousness involves the individual's becoming an object to himself by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within an organized setting of social relationships, and that unless the individual had thus become an object to himself he would not be self-conscious or have a self at all.'

⁷ Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1975: 146; Gladigow 1986: 151ff.; Kippenberg 1991a.

⁸ Burkert 1986: 82f. See also Brodersen 1991.

⁹ Noth remarks in his *Heiliger Krieg und Heiliger Kampf in Christentum und Islam* (1966: 21f.): 'Fassen wir als "heilige Kriege" bewaffnete Unternehmungen auf, bei denen die Religion allein das Gesetz des Handelns bestimmte und nicht

zugleich Volkswohl, Landesverteidigung, Staatsinteresse oder nationale Ehre mit im Spiel waren, dann hat es "heilige Kriege" im Islam auf staatlicher Ebene nie gegeben. Missionskriege, die als heilige Kriege angesprochen werden können, waren die Kämpfe der Muslims noch nicht einmal zu Lebzeiten des Propheten. In der Folgezeit wurde der Missionskrieg zwar theoretisch konzipiert, aber nicht in die Tat umgesetzt.' Cp. also Weippert 1972: 490. 'Der "Heilige Krieg" als eine von "profanen" Kriegen unterschiedene Institution ist weder im Alten Testament noch in außer-biblischen altorientalischen Texten nachweisbar. Es empfiehlt sich, den—auch sonst problematischen—Terminus zu vermeiden, wenn auf den von G. v. Rad und seinen Vorgängern und Nachfolgern damit bezeichneten Themenkreis Bezug genommen wird.'

[10] Weippert 1972: 485ff. 'Wichtig erscheint mir jedoch die Erkenntnis, daß diese Motive in den assyrischen Königsinschriften eine legitimierende Funktion haben. Sie sollen zeigen, daß in den Kriegen des Königs und seiner Truppen der Wille des Reichsgottes Assur und der anderen großen Götter vollstreckt wird, daß der König als vicarius deorum auf die Weisung und mit dem Beistand seiner "Herren" handelt. [...] Die Legitimation kann auch propagandistisch verwendet werden, etwa bei öffentlich zugänglichen Siegessäulen. Auch in Israel läßt sich die legitimierende Funktion der Motive vom göttlichen Eingreifen in Kampf-handlungen mit einiger Sicherheit feststellen' (o.c. 487f). The 'polytheism thesis' should be examined further with respect to this historical material. This is, how-ever, beyond the competence of the present author.

[11] The papal proclamation of crusade can, on the contrary, not be regarded separately from attempts to bring complete power (*plenitudo potestatis*) into the hands of the church. Cp. Noth (1966: 21f.): 'Der Character des islamischen Staates (oder später der islamischen Staaten) als Gemeinschaft, in der Religion und Politik untrennbar miteinander verbunden waren, [...] verhinderte es, daß der Kampf gegen Ungläubige ein reiner Religionskrieg wurde.'

[12] Cp. Mead 1982: 173 'The individual may indeed sacrifice the physiological organism for the benefit of the group; man as an organism may go down and give his life for the group which persists. Body and mind thus have different unities.' Though Noth (1966: 135ff.) emphasizes the personal character of both the Islamic duty of *jihād* and the Christian vow to take up the cross—which both promised the individual the fruits of martyrdom in the hereafter—we should not lose sight of the fact that in both cases the individual was strongly reminded of his holy duty by a collective body, either the Church of Rome or the Islamic state, the avowed beneficiaries of the individual's sacrifice.

[13] Cp. the *Bhagavadgītā* 10.3.6,38: 'I am the gambling of cheaters, the energy of the energetic ones. I am conquest, I am resolve, I am the vigour of the vigorous. [...] I am the rule of the subduers, the policy of those "who wish to conquer," I am the silence of things hidden, I am the knowledge of those who know.' *Agaystyasaṃhitā* 5.47: 'For those who live, having realized that the self is eternal Rāma, there is no misdeed and no misfortune arising from a misdeed.'

[14] This is not to say, of course, that community did not exist in South Asia. But communities were basically founded in the *social* ramifications of caste and village. Though Stein rightly attributes a significant role to religion (worship) in the for-mation of communities on local and regional level, the postulated '*segmentary* state' testifies *eo ipso* to the limitedness of the communities involved. Stein 1991: 'Com-munity must be understood according to the usual English signification of being simultaneously a people and a place, rather than in its limited and debased usage as sub-caste or religious group. [...] However, in addition to the sharing of sen-

timents and values, community is also about shared rights or entitlements over human and material resources. Thus, in its particularities and under conditions of premodern technology, community pertains to smaller, local spatial entities.' The picture becomes more complicated when we take Buddhism into consideration. Already in an early stage Buddhism tended to extend the community of monks (*saṅgha*) to the community of all followers of the Buddhist faith. Consequently in that community the concept of the Bodhisattva, the one who temporarily sacrifices his own salvation for the benefit of all, could arise.

[15] For instance expressed in the *Bhagavadgītā*: 'There is nothing transcending me, O Dhanaṃjaya: this universe is strung on me like pearls on a string' (7.7). 'I know all beings, past, present and those to come, O Arjuna, but no one knows me' (7.26). 'But there is another, Highest Person, who is referred to as the Supreme Soul: He is the eternal Lord who pervades this universe and sustains it.' Cp. Chaudhuri 1980: 148f.: 'In the foreground stands one object of faith for all Hindus. It is a genuine, monotheistic, personal God. [...] Though he is a personal God, he is never thought of or spoken about as an anthropomorphic God in a physical form. [...] Nevertheless, this Bhagavan has never been worshipped, nor has he ever been an object of regular prayer. [...] Below this God there was the specific world of the Hindu gods [...].'

[16] Ibn Asír's *Kámilu-t Tawáríkh*, Elliot and Dowson 1867-77 II: 468f.

[17] Mulla Ahmad Tattawí's *Táríkh-i Alfí*, Elliot and Dowson 1867-77 II: 471f.

[18] *Kámilu-t Tawáríkh*, Elliot and Dowson 1867-77 II: 470f.

[19] Abu-l Fazl's *Akbar Nāma* (transl. Beveridge), Vol. II: 423.

[20] Tulsī Dās' *Rāmacaritamānasa* (*Uttarakhaṇḍa Cau.* 18.4-*Cau.* 21.4), transl. W. Douglas P. Hill.

[21] See also Freitag 1989: 30f.

[22] Bakker 1986 I: 44f., 133f., II: 146f.

[23] Sarkar 1958: 123ff.; Barnett 1980: 56f.

[24] *Śrīmahārājacaritra* of Raghunātha Prasāda: 42f.

[25] For this episode see Bhatnagar 1968; Carnegy 1870: 21; Bakker 1986 II: 147f.

[26] On similar processes in Islam cp. Lawrence 1990: 240.

[27] In this connexion it is significant that the term (and concept) 'Hinduism' was first introduced by the missionaries of the Baptist Missionary Society in Bengal at the beginning of the 19th century (Ward 1817: 348, 427), for lack of an adequate indigenous term. See van den Bosch 1990: 18.

[28] For St. Augustine the New Jerusalem was not a historical geographic reality, but the City of God situated at the end of time. In the eleventh century, however, when pope Urban II proclaimed the First Crusade, this idea became reified in the actual Jerusalem that only awaited emancipation from its desacration by the Gentiles (i.e. Muslims). (Robertus Monachus 1866: 729).

[29] Cp. Riesebrodt 1990: 243.

[30] For more information on the history and background of the RSS see Anderson and Damle 1987. Though it is not the aim of the present paper to depict the rise of Hindu fundamentalism, several tendencies indicated here are evidently at the core of the fundamentalist world-view as described by Riesebrodt 1990: 214ff. Cp. also Freitag 1989.

[31] In the early phase of Hindu fundamentalism (as embodied in the RSS) the 'liberation' of Rāma's Birth-spot in Ayodhyā did not yet take a special place. Gradually it was realized however, that to combine fundamentalist aims with a pilgrim's goal like Ayodhyā had unparalleled mass-mobilizing potential. A similar

process seems to have taken place in the history of the crusades: 'Der Einfluß des Pilgerwesens, wenn nicht auf die Entstehung, so doch auf den Character schon der ersten kriegerischen Orientfahrten der Abendländer ist bekanntlich sehr stark gewesen, und die Verbindung von Wallfahrt und Heidenkrieg kann geradezu als typisch für die gesamte Kreuzzugbewegung gelten. Den Anstoß dazu hat wiederum Urban II. gegeben, indem er das Wallfahrerziel Jerusalem zum Marschziel der geplanten Orientexpedition bestimmte. Daß Urban Jerusalem in seinen Kreuzzugplan aufnahm, ist wahrscheinlich aus Gründen der Werbung geschehen, denn—wie Erdmann überzeugend hat nachweisen können—sah Urban den Zweck der Orientexpedition nicht in der Eroberung Jerusalems, sondern allgemeiner in der Befreiung der Orientalischen Kirchen.' (Noth 1966: 128).

[32] As described in van der Veer 1987, this campaign found little support from the monasteries and temples in Ayodhyā itself, which feared that the turmoil involved would endanger their own income.

[33] *jis hindū kā khūn na khaule, khūn nahīṃ vah pānī hai/janmabhūmi ke kām na aye, vah bekār javānī hai// (India Today* October 31, 1989: 29).

[34] The nature of this 'abuse' can be illustrated when we apply the typology of 'religious revivalist movements' proposed by M. Riesebrodt 1990: 18ff. Riesebrodt reduces this type of movements to a 'Krisenbewußtsein' as a result of 'rapider sozialer Wandel,' but he distinguishes two types of response. In search of authenticity both responses make an appeal to a 'göttliches Gesetz, eine Offenbarung oder auf eine ideale Urgemeinde' (e.g. the *Rāma rājya*). 'Doch kann dieses Anknüpfen an eine ursprüngliche ideale Ordnung *mythisch* oder *utopisch* ausgerichtet sein. Als Mythos hat sie die Funktion einer restaurativen Krisenbewältigung. Das ''Goldene Zeitalter'' soll durch Rückkehr zu seinen wörtlich tradierten Ordnungsprinzipien wiederhergestellt werden. Als Utopie dagegen dient die ideale Ordnung zu einer ''progressiven'' sozialreformerischen oder sozialrevolutionären Krisenbewältigung. Nicht den Buchstaben, sondern den ''Geist'' der in der Vergangenheit einmal verwirklichten idealen Ordnung gilt es unter neuen Bedingungen zu realisieren. Demzufolge ist das ''mythische'' Denken tendenziell durch eine rigide Gesetzethik, das ''utopische'' Denken dagegen durch eine radikale Gesinnungsethik gekennzeichnet.'' (o.c. 20). It is clear that Mahatma Gandhi exemplifies the 'utopic' type of movement, whereas the movement described here should be classified as 'mythic.' Riesebrodt proposes to restrict the use of the term 'fundamentalism' to the latter type of movement.

THE ALMOHAD TAWHĪD: THEOLOGY WHICH RELIES ON LOGIC

MADELEINE FLETCHER

Summary

The Almohad dynasty of twelfth century Spain and North Africa patronized the study of Greek philosophy. Almohad scholars were largely responsible for editing and commentating the texts of Aristotle which came into the hands of Thomas Aquinas, greatly facilitating the development of scholastic theology in thirteenth century Europe.

This paper investigates the theology of Ibn Tumart to describe the extent to which this taste for philosophy was consistent with the teaching of the aforementioned founder of the Almohad movement who was a Berber jurist from the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. We find that Ibn Tumart's teaching assigns a radically important role to reason in theology, declaring reason to be a source of religious doctrine along with scripture (the Koran and the Hadith).

Throughout the essay, internal evidence provided by an ongoing comparison between Ibn Tumart's two *murshida*s and what had previously been assumed to be his most important credal document, his *'aqīda*, reveals the latter to have been the product of a heavy editing process which occurred after Ibn Tumart's death, probably in 1183 at the time of the writing down of the manuscript *a'azzu ma yutlab* which was published as *Le livre d'Ibn Toumert* by Luciani in 1903.

The paper attempts to define Ibn Tumart's theology of *tawhīd* in relation to other systems in which the word functions as a concept. Possible definitions thus provided are accepted or rejected. Questions considered are: 1 Whether Almohad *tawhīd* can be seen as a denial of the attributes of God as in Mu'tazilite theology. 2 Whether Almohad *tawhīd* can be seen as the *tawhīd* of *ittisāl* or of Pantheistic monism. 2 Whether Almohad *tawhīd* and its aspect of anti-anthromorphism can be seen as a rejection of animistic and folkloric remnants.

Résumé

La dynastie almohade, qui régnait sur l'Espagne musulmane et l'Afrique du Nord au XIIe siecle, favorisa l'étude de la philosophie grecque. Les érudits almohades préparèrent les éditions et commentaires d'Aristote qui furent transmises rapidement à Thomas d'Aquin, et facilitèrent beaucoup le dévelopement de la pensée scolastique de l'Europe au cours du XIIIe siècle.

Cette étude puise dans la théologie du mahdi Ibn Tumart, fondateur du mouvement almohade, les éléments qui indiquent que cette tendence philosophique était dejà présente dans la pensée d'Ibn Tumart, un juriste berbère né dans le haut Atlas. Il est remarquable, en effet, que l'enseignement d'Ibn Tumart accorde à la raison une importance essentielle dans la théorie et la considère comme une source de la connaissance religieuse à ajouter aux Ecritures (le coran et le hadith), sources traditionelles de la conaissance religieuse.

Dans cette investigation, la comparaison entre les *murshida* d'Ibn Tumart et le document qui avait été considéré jusqu'à présent l'expression la plus importante de sa doctrine, le *'aqīda*, montre à l'évidence que ce dernier ne date pas de l'époque d'Ibn Tumart mais qu'il a été édité et modifié après sa mort, probablement vers 1183, l'année de la redaction du manuscrit *A'azzu ma yutlab* publié par Luciani en 1903 sous le titre *Le livre d'Ibn Topumert.*

Cette étude essaye de définir la théologie du *tawhīd* almohade à la lumière d'autres théologies qui emploient le même mot "tawhīd." L'examen critique des questions soulevées se présente ainsi: 1 Peut-on considérer que le *tawhīd* almohade rejette les attributs de Dieu comme dans la théologie mu'tazilite? 2 Peut-on considérer le *tawhīd* almohade comme le *tawhīd* de *ittisāl* (l'union mystique avec l'Un) ou celui du monisme panthéiste? 3 Peut-on considérer que le *tawhīd* almohade dans son aspect d'anti-anthropomorphisme rejette les éléments de l'animisme folklorique de l'islam populaire?

The Almohad dynasty of twelfth century Spain and North Africa patronized the study of Greek philosophy. Works such as Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle, Ibn Tufayl's philosophical novel *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* and Moses Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*, show the personality of this Almohad renaissance which enormously influenced European thirteenth century scholasticism through the writings of Saint Thomas of Aquinas and others who studied these authors.

The problem examined in this article is the relationship between this Almohad high culture and the theology of the Madhi Ibn Tumart who founded the Almohad movement. Ibn Tumart was a Berber jurist (*faqīh*) from Morocco, whose movement spread from his native Atlas mountains to become an empire which included all of North Africa and most of Spain and Portugal. As a jurist, Ibn Tumart's life and thought had ethical and juridical dimensions which lie outside the scope of the present article which deals exclusively with his theology.

Ibn Tumart's theology prefigures the splendid Almohad philosophical development in his abstract definition of the nature of the One God. His use of *tawhīd* as the central principle of his movement differed from his use of mahdism and miracles which were political tools appropriate to the Berber tribal environment. In his own mind, Ibn Tumart identified his movement with the abstract definition of God's Oneness, or *tawhīd*: so his followers were called Almohads or *al-Muwahhidīn*: "those who declare *tawhīd*".

Tawhīd was the focus of an extraordinary teaching effort during

the lifetime of Ibn Tumart. The anonymous historical chronicle *al-Hulal al-Mawshiyya* describes the teaching process:[1]

"The first thing [Ibn Tumart] did upon taking command was to write them a book in the Berber language which he called *al-tawhīd*. It was divided into seven parts according to the seven days of the week, and he ordered them to read a section each day after the morning prayer after finishing the selection from the Koran. In it, there was the knowledge of God and the other dogmas, such as the knowledge of God's decrees, and predestination, and faith in what is characteristic of God, and of what is impossible in Him and what is possible, and what a Muslim should do to impose orthodoxy and prohibit the illicet and to join together in brotherhood for this purpose."

The essence of *tawhīd* was contained in the *murshidas*[2] or short credal statements, which Ibn Tumart's followers memorized under pain of death (for the first two failures to memorize the punishment was whipping, and for the third, death). There are also many texts entitled *tawhīd* in *Le livre d'Ibn Toumert*,[3] consisting of theology which is independent of the Koran, the hadith or jurisprudence. Some of these must be from the original book of Ibn Tumart mentioned above, but which ones they are cannot be known for sure since it seems clear from internal inconsistencies that not all of *Le livre* is Ibn Tumart's. Many things including the Almohad *'aqīda* seem to have been edited and new passages written, some perhaps date from 1183 when the compilation was written down during the reign of the Almohad Caliph Yusuf (the patron of Averroes). There is a passage entitled "on the understanding of the manner of proving the knowledge of *tawhīd*" in the terse epigrammatical style which we have come to identify as characteristic of Ibn Tumart. In it *tawhīd* is said to be known by reason or logic, and what follows is a proof of God from the Creation:[4]

"Chapter on the understanding of the manner of proving the knowledge of *tawhīd*:

By the necessity of logic His *tawhīd* is known, Praise to Him, through the wide testimony of His acts from the aspect of the necessity of created things for a Creator, and the necessity of the existence of a Creator, praise to Him and the impossibility of the entrance of doubt as to the existence of Him whose existence is necessary."

Thus it seems that for Ibn Tumart, the concept of *tawhīd* included the study of a number of theological themes where there was a sphere for reason independent of revelation and hadith.

During the reign of the first Almohad caliph, the *tawhīd* continued to be central Almohad propaganda. It was the level of knowledge of the *tawhīd* and of the other standard Sunni elements such as the Koran and the hadith, which determined the position of individuals in the hierarchical levels of the propaganda organization which constituted the Almohad governmental structure.[5] There is a circular letter known as *Risālat al-Fusūl*[6] which was sent from the chancellory of the first caliph, Abd al-Mu'min, to each newly conquered city.[7] Its instructions show the importance given to *tawhīd*:

"First, begin with the first principle of Islam and inculcate the people with the knowledge of the *tawhīd*."

The letter orders all the inhabitants on pain of death to memorize the shorter *murshida*:

"And included in this obligation are the men and women and the free and the slave and everyone who is legally responsible, since no action on their part will be correct and no word from them acceptible without their understanding the *tawhīd*."

The *tawhīd* is discussed again during the reign of the second Almohad caliph, Yusuf Abu Ya'qub in the disquisition on *usūl* in *le livre*. Although this introductory section supposedly represents the gist of Ibn Tumart's oral teaching based on notes taken down by his followers, internal evidence suggests it was importantly re-cast in 1183.[8] The passage shows the rationalizing tendency typical of the second generation of Almohads and the court of Yusuf, the philosopher king, patron of Averroes. It declares that *tawhīd* relies for its validity upon logical reasoning:[9]

"The method of *tawhīd* is logical reasoning (*al-'aql*), and likewise the *tanzīh* (elimination of anthropomorphic elements) and there is no way for multiple transmission to be used in the two of them."

Now if *tawhīd* is both 1) essential to belief, and 2) known by logic, it follows inescapably that a correct understanding of logic is essential to belief. So we have arrived at Averroes' standpoint in the *Fasl al-Maqal*,[10] namely, that philosophical truth has a kind of final authority in religion. This way of understanding *tawhīd* provides a

religious justification for the study of philosophy. The passage
demonstrates the spirit of Almohadism at its most typical; a mind-
set which prefers where possible to depend upon reason and to
follow the rules of logic.

This attitude is in accord with Tumart's original texts on *tawhīd*
and is the germ of later Almohad achievements in philosophy, but
the idea is by no means a universally held notion in Sunni Islam.
For example, two centuries before the above passage was written,
an Eastern Malikite, al-Baqillani, flatly contradicted the notion that
tawhīd is to be understood by logical reasoning:[11]

"We have shown elsewhere the falsity of [the Qadariyya's] asser-
tion that the necessity of knowing and professing God's unity is
something known by the intellect and hence is in no need of an
Apostle to summon to it."

The fact is that this is an old argument which arose between the
Qadariyya or Mu'tazilites and the more traditional thinkers and
continued to be debated during the time of the Almohads. The
complex history of this debate on the position of reason is one of the
main threads in the development of Islamic theology. What is clear
from the outset is that the Almohads founded their ideology upon
tawhīd and assigned a radically important role to reason in theology.
In the next sections we will consider the linkages between Almohad
terminology and existing movements and currents of thought.

*The relationship of Almohad theology to Mu'tazilite tawhīd, defined as a
denial of the sifat, or Attributes of God*

The Almohads were not the first to use the word *tawhīd* in a
theological context. What scholars of Islam would associate with the
word *tawhīd* is the concept developed by the Mu'tazilites who called
themselves "the people of justice and *tawhīd*" in the well-known
and much vexed eighth century controversy on the nature of God.
By this time Ibn Tumart studied in Baghdad, certain issues in this
controversy had been the subject of scholastic debate among
Muslim religious scholars for almost four centuries.

H. A. Wolfson[12] has made an exceedingly interesting study of the
context of the original Mu'tazilite debate and sees the first
Mu'tazilites as reacting to a previous islamic theology which had

been strongly influenced by philosophical concepts current among late Greek Christian theologians concerning the trinity, concepts which probably owed their existence to pagan Neoplatonism.

An example of this Neoplatonic influence is the concept of the attributes (*sifāt*) of God which maintain a separate but united existence (Christian theology has a similar concept in the three persons of the Godhead). The Mu'tazilites considered this early islamic doctrine of attributes to be the heresy of "giving God an associate" or *tashrīk* and insisted upon *tawhīd* or the denial of these attributes. In the context of this same early polemic the Mu'tazilites learned Greek philosophy to refute their opponents for whom it constituted the only acceptable form of proof.

After this early point the controversy carried its own inertia of motion, even though the context of the original objection to the attributes or *sifāt* was forgotten. The Mu'tazilites enjoyed the support of the government for a while and showed much cruelty to those who disagreed with them in the *mihna* or inquisition of 832-847 A.D. Ousted from their dominant position by the time of Ibn Tumart's arrival in Bagdad in about 1107 A.D., they continued to oppose the notion of *sifāt* which persisted among the Ash'arite theologians who had replaced them in the position of dominance.

Thus the *sifāt* remained a bone of contention between the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites who felt they had to deny the attibutes, a position called *ta'tīl*. Ibn Khaldun describes Mu'tazilite *ta'tīl* as follows:[13]

"The Mu'tazilites broadened the meaning of the deanthropomorphization (*al-tanzīh*) which is implied in the negative verses [such as 'Nought is there like Him' (42:9) and 'There is none equal with Him' (112:4)] and took it to mean the denial of the attributes conceived as things (*sifāt al-ma'ānī*), such as knowledge and power and will and life, in addition to [taking it to mean the mere denial of the literalness of] these terms used as predications (*zā'ida 'alā ihkāmiha*) [that is, used in the form of participles such as knowing and powerful and willing and living]."

In spite of Ibn Khaldun's conventional islamic decorum which presents the controversey purely in terms of Koranic exegesis, the reader can hardly imagine how the problem thus stated could have arisen from the exclusive consideration of Koranic text. The very

abstract nature of the terminology suggests a non-koranic origin, making Wolfson's explanation which goes back to the Greek sources entirely satisfying and convincing.

To return to the question of whether interpreting Almohad *tawhīd* as a Mu'tazilite denial of the attributes is an appropriate way to understand Ibn Tumart's doctrine,[14] the following brief passage in the shorter *murshida* gives a glimpse of this problem:

"He possesses greatness and majesty, power and perfection, knowledge and freewill, sovereignty and power, life and duration and the beautiful names."

With respect to the attributes of God or *sifāt*, which the Mu'tazilites denied (*ta'tīl*) we see that Ibn Tumart does avoid the word *sifā*, neither afirming nor denying but speaking only of God's names (*asmā'*) but that he concedes qualities in God which he specifies.

In a *fatwa* or juridical decision written specifically on this shorter *murshida*, the famous Hanbalite jurist Ibn Taimiyya seems to include Ibn Tumart among those such as the Mu'tazilites for whom the essential meaning of *tawhīd* is the negation of the attributes. He bases his suspicion on the use of the name *Al-Muwahhid* in his final summation on the point:[15]

"The Jahmiya who deny the attributes—Mu'tazilites and other schismatics—call *tawhīd* the negation of attributes... The author of the *murshida* has given his followers the name of Al-Muwahhid following those same people who invented themselves a conception of God contrary to divine revelation—since they denied the concept of unity as the Koran has revealed it."

But this would seem to be an exaggeration of Ibn Tumart's position on the attributes, since we see that in his *murshida* he grants God individual qualities which he specifies. In any case Ibn Taimiyya's opinion, written 200 years after Ibn Tumart's *murshida*, gives a perspective of a later generation on the issue.

In contrast to Ibn Tumart's *murshida*, which follows Mu'tazilite dogma, the Almohad *'aqīda* clearly follows Asharite dogma and specifically denies Mu'tazilite *ta'tīl* by name, although the word "attribute" (*sifā*) does not appear. We have mentioned that we suspect that the *'aqīda* represents a revision of Ibn Tumart's thought by others at a later date, while the *murshida* criticized by Ibn

Taimiyya is, beyond any reasonable doubt, exclusively Ibn Tumart's original phrasing. The difference between the two documents reflects the growing popularity of the Ash'arites over the Mu'tazilite school in the course of the twelfth century. (In contrast, at the turn of the century Al-Ghazali also preferred the Mu'tazilites).[16] The *'aqīda* presents a specifically Ash'arite slant on a number of questions, for example, on the attributes:[17]

"There is a limit to human understanding at which it stops and which it does not exceed. And that is the inability to assign modality (an explanation of particular circumstances) and past this limit [human understanding] has no sphere and application except anthropomorphism and *ta'tīl* (denying God all His attributes) and that is absurd and unthinkable—and everything which leads to the absurd is absurd."

In conclusion, the identification of Almohad *tawhīd* with the negation of the attributes is clearly an inadequate understanding of the issue. While Ibn Tumart's *murshida* appears to hold a moderate Mu'tazilite position on the attributes, the *'aqīda* clearly takes the Ash'arite position. Thus any simplistic notion of the meaning of the Almohad *tawhīd* in this connection will have to be discarded in favor of the general notion of *tawhīd* as an exercise in the abstract definition of God.

The most interesting aspect of the controversy about the *sifāt* in general is how it attests a persistent influence of Neoplatonism. Although over the four centuries of polemic, the attributes of God are alternately seen as an element of innovation and as an element of tradition, the long life of the controversy shows the vigor of an original Neoplatonism which persisted as a surprisingly consistent influence in Islamic as in Christian theology.

Almohad Tawhīd as Pantheistic Monism

There is a poetic passage in Ibn Tumart's *murshida* which is clearly pantheistic:

"He is unique in all eternity; nothing coexists with Him, nothing exists outside of Him, neither land nor sky, nor water nor air, neither populated nor unpopulated world, neither light nor shadows, nor night nor day, nor reality nor noise, sound nor mur-

mur; there is only the Unique, the Irresistable. He is in all eternity, the only one to possess uniqueness, domination and divinity. Nothing guides created things with Him, nothing shares power with Him. He has the sentence and the decision; the laud and the praise.''

Certainly the above statement ''Nothing exists outside of Him'' sounds like Plotinus' pantheistic monism, with its idea that the world is really only the One. This presents us with yet another meaning associated with the term *tawhīd* as a possible interpretation of Ibn Tumart's concept of *tawhīd* in the *murshida*. *Tawhīd* with its root in *wāhid*, the Arabic word for the number one, could be taken as a reference to making the One the source from which all comes. Speaking of the pantheistic passages of Al-Ghazali's *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, Wensinck identifies them as Neoplatonic:[18]

''It is clear that this extremist monism, to which we have already alluded above, is Plotinian rather than Islamic. One cannot hide the fact that the easy infiltration of that extremism is explained in large part by the usage of the term *tawhīd* which is the technical term expressing equally the central dogma of Islam and the essence of Plotinian thought...''

Neoplatonic influence would have been in the air in Baghdad when Ibn Tumart studied there, in so far as it has been found in his contemporary, al-Ghazali. The elite was familiar with Neoplatonic writings, but the practical expression of the doctrine was far more widespread in the ecstatic exercises of Sufis. The trance state which the Sufis called *ittisāl* and interpreted as a state of union with God was also at the heart of Neoplatonic philosophy.[19] Moreover, the pantheism mentioned above is both a tenent of Neoplatonic philosophy and a psychological reality of the trance experience in which the person in the trance state believes himself to be connected to everything while at the same time attaining the One.[20] Thus the pantheistic monism of the *murshida* may give evidence of Ibn Tumart's familiarity with the trance state which contradicts assertions that he had nothing to do with Sufism.[21]

Once again, in contrast to the *murshida*, the passage in the *'aqīda* on this sensitive subject is extremely discrete and very brief:[22]

''Anything which is conceived of must be restricted to the ten following terms: before and after, underneath and above, right and

left, in front of and behind, whole and part: and that, given that for anyone to be restricted to these terms, it is necessary to be created and to have need of a Creator, a Creator who is the Independent and the Glorious.''

In other words, God is not created so He is not subject to the *distinction between whole and part* since the *'aqīda* stipulates that only created beings are restricted to these terms. If He is not subject to a distinction between whole and part, God may be defined as the One, who is the whole and everything, although we will not be able to conceive of this, since, according to the *'aqīda*, our minds are restricted in their conceptions to the ten terms. In this way, pantheistic monism is suggested in the *'aqīda* but not openly declared as in the *murshida*. This means that objections had been raised and had been addressed by editing on this point without completely losing the basic idea. The difference between the two documents on this point is further evidence that the *'aqīda* is a revision of Ibn Tumart's thought with a view to its acceptance in the milieu of al-Andalus in 1183 rather than his original words. Thus to answer the question of whether the interpretation of *tawhīd* as pantheism is valid we can say yes, basing ourselves on the undoubted authenticity of the first *murshida* and its uncontrovertably pantheistic statements.

Looking to the future development of this idea, the pantheistic monism of the Sufi thinker Muhy al-Din al-'Arabi falls well within the limits set by Ibn Tumart's *murshida*.

Almohad Tawhīd as anti-Anthropomorphism

A part of *tawhīd* or ''abstract theology'',, as we have now defined it, is *tanzīh*, or the rejection of any comparison of God with created beings. Ibn Tumart mentions this as an ingredient of *tawhīd* in a letter to the Alhomad community:[23]

''Be assiduous to learn what you should of your religious obligations and work on learning the *tawhīd* because it is the basis of your religion, in order to deny all comparison (*tashbīh*) or association (*tashrīk*) to the Creator, or any idea of imperfection, diminution, limit or direction. Do not situate Him in a place, nor in a direction; because the All High exists before places and directions. He who

puts him in a place or a direction gives Him a corporal form; and
he who gives him a corporeal form makes Him a created being; and
he who makes Him a created being is like he who worship an idol.
And he who dies in this belief will stay forever in hell! But he who
learns his *tawhīd* comes out pure of his sins as the day his mother
bore him: if he dies in that state, he will stay in Paradise.''

By the time of Ibn Tumart's visit to Bagdad, the Ash'arites had
adopted this Mu'tazilite doctrine of anti-anthropomorphism but
both schools were opposed on this point by a large group of
scholars, mainly Hanbalites. The Almohad *murshida* takes the
Mu'tazilite-Ash'arite attitude, namely *tanzīh* or the total disassocia-
tion of God from human characteristics or an anti-
anthropomorphist view of God.

The conventional theory[24] about anthropomorphism is that it
arises from certain passages in the Koran where normal linguistic
usage would imply a human from God, since they mention God sit-
ting on the throne or descending, and speak of parts of the body in
connection with God. People interpreted these expressions
variously, some Hanibalites feeling they should be taken in a literal
sense[25] while the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites preferred an
allegorical sense (*ta'wīl*). This anti-anthropomorphism was a cen-
tral point of Almohad dogma to which great political importance
was given, since ''Anthropomorphists'' (*mujassimūn*), meaning
those who give God a body, was the insult used as war-cry against
the Almoravids during Ibn Tumart's campaigns against them.

To look beyond Koranic exegesis to the contexual root of this
anti-anthropomorphism, on the simplest level, namely that of local
anthropology, Ibn Tumart's emphasis against anthropomorphism
could in part be a reaction against animistic and folkloric remnants
of the pre-Islamic paganism. We have the testimony of the
geographer Ibn Hawqal from about the year 951, a century before
the Almoravids. He describes the region of the Sus in Morocco (Ibn
Tumart's native land) saying:[26]

''The Malikites are to be counted among the more crude
Anthropomophists'' ... ''one deplores the depraved customs of the
Malikites, the more their living standard rises, the more brutal and
turbulent they become.'' Since Ibn Hawqal was a traveler not a
theologian, he must have meant some very obvious pagan ritual or
belief.

A century and a half later in his letters to the Almohad community, Ibn Tumart points out that the Almoravids, who persecute the pious Almohads as heretics, consider as their obedient subjects "those who follow lies and the footsteps of Satan using pagan practices and eating illicit food",[27] In *Le livre* we read "*tawhīd* destroys what was before it of unbelief *kufr* and remnants or relics *athār*." (p. 276) and "*Tawhīd* is the affirmation of the One and the refutation of all that is not He, be it a divinity, an associate, a saint or an idol (*tāghūt*)." (p. 271). Ibn Qattan testifies to Ibn Tumart's campaign against paganism among the mountain tribes. In spite of these indications, it is unfortunately in the nature of folk-belief to leave scant written evidence so the specific beliefs can not be described, but it is clear that at various times Ibn Tumart emphasized *tawhīd* in opposition to paganism or to a local Islam mixed with some pagan elements.

In any case Ibn Tumart has a great deal to say against anthropomorphism. He takes the Mu'tazilite position of radical *tanzīh* or denial of the similarity between God and man to the point that he says more about what God is *not* than about what He is. For example the opening passage from the shorter *murshida* presents the kind of negative definition which is recapitulated in page after page of *Le livre*:

"There is no God other than the One whom existing things show and created things attest, since existence is absolutely necessary to God, and that without restriction or particularization of time, place, orientation, term, kind, form, figure, measure, aspect and state.

He is the First without being limited by anything before Him, the Last without being limited by anything after Him; Unique without being limited by place; Invoked, without being limited by quality; Glorious, without being limited by similarity. He is neither determined by the intelligence nor represented by the imagination nor attained by thought, nor conceived of by reason. He is not expressed by localization and deplacement, nor by transformation and disappearance, nor by ignorance and constraint, nor by powerlessness and needyness."

The negative definition of God evident here,[28] was attacked by Ibn Taimiyya in the aforementioned *fatwa* or legal brief he wrote

on Ibn Tumart's *murshida*. He was motivated to undertake this criticism by his disagreement with the religious thought of a group of Maghribian followers of Ibn al-Arabi and Ibn Sab'in with whom he was debating in Alexandria. Thus Ibn Taimiyya's *fatwa* illuminates the clear filiation of thought between Ibn Tumart and Ibn al-Arabi and Ibn Sab'īn as well as showing that in Ibn Taimiyya's mind, there was a link between all three of them and the philosophers. Ibn Taimiyya, writing in 1310, says:[29]

"As for those who are opposed to the prophets like the philosophers and their like, they describe God by negative attributes; they say that God is neither of this way nor of that, nor of another, and they refuse to describe God by positive attributes. Now only nothingness can be described only by a negative. God, according to their description, is thus assimilated to nothingness and no difference remains between what they affirm and nothingness. Nevertheless they say that God exists and that He is not nothingness. Thus they are in contradiction with themselves, since on the one hand they say that God exists, while on the other they deny it."

It does seem that the negative definition has far less afinity with the Semitic notion of divinity than with the ideas of Greek philosophy, be it Neoplatonic or Aristotelian. The negative definition is also compatible with the Sufi experience of mystical union [gnosis or *ma'rifa*] which was spreading throughout the Islamic world at that time, since a God inherently undefined as to specific form, place, aspect or state is more plausably compatible with the psychological reality of the perception of the One which constitutes the mystic trance. We have already spoken of the connection of Neoplatonism with Sufism through the psychological truth of the trance state in which the perception of the One is interpreted as being the state of *ittisāl* or union with God.

Through its compatibility with the concept of the Prime Mover of the Aristotelian natural science then current,[30] the Almohad notion of a God known by logical reasoning and definable in abstract philosophical language allows for the mediation of natural laws between God and creation, thereby legitimizing and even mandating the study of these laws through natural science and philosophy. Thus the theology of Ibn Tumart leads to the seemingly

paradoxical duo: mysticism and scientific thought, as components of the Almohad synthesis of two Greek philosophical systems: that of Plotinius and that of Aristotle.

Political ramifications of the doctrine of tawhīd

A further consequence of the premise that God is knowable through logical reasoning is to take away from Revelation its position as primary and indispensible evidence for God, since it posits that human reason without Revelation is itself sufficient to arrive at the truths of religion. This is the message incarnated by Hayy ibn Yaqzan, the protagonist of Ibn Tufayl's philosophical novel who, although born apart from mankind (by spontaneous generation on a deserted island), is able to discover all the truths of Revelation through a process of introspection and observation of the natural world. Thus perfectly reasonable men are held to be able to know theological truth by the light of unaided reason.

We may perhaps see consequences of this point of view not only for Muslims but also unhappy ones for Jews and Christians, whose Revelation was the basis of the tolerant truce the Muslims extended to the 'people of the book' living under Muslim rule. The agressive certainty of the new theology and new historical circumstances abrogated this tolerance. The obligatory memorization of the creed, and the forced conversion of Christians and Jews (including Moses Maimonides' father and his family) may thus be ideological as well as a reaction to deteriorating political relationships. The Andalusian Christians [*mozarabes*] had broken with Muslim protection in 1126 A.D. by giving Alfonso el Batallador of Aragon military assistance in his raids and in consequence the Almoravids had expelled many of them to Morocco. Andalusian Muslims had not contemplated living peacefully under Christian rule since 1085, when Alfonso VI of Castille broke the terms of the treaty under which the Muslims of Toledo had surrendered to him by converting the cathedral mosque of Toledo into a Christian cathedral. While political and military insecurity made the Muslims suspicious and fearful of their non-Muslim subjects, the new theological statement laid a claim to universality which the former koranic declaration about the people of the book did not.[31]

In conclusion, Ibn Tumart's theology can be seen to parallel the later Almohad cultural development, both in its self-conscious dependence upon a process of reasoning which foreshadows the official Almohad support for Averroes' work on Aristotle, and in its expression of pantheistic mysticism, which foreshadows the peculiar and very influential personality of Muhy al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi.

Tufts University,   MADELEINE FLETCHER
Medford, MA 02155

¹ I. S. Allouche, *Chronique anonyme*, Institut des Hautes Etudes Marocaines, 1936. pp. 89-90. A. Huici Miranda, transl., *Al-hulal al-Mawshiyya*, Tetuan: Editora Marroqui, 1951 p. 131.

² According to the *risālat al-fusūl* (see below).

³ This material edited by J. D. Luciani with an introduction by Ignaz Goldziher was published under the title *Le Livre de Mohammed Ibn Toumert*, Algiers, Pierre Fontana, 1903. This is a disparate collection of texts assembled and copied down at the end of the reign of the second Alhomad Caliph, Yusuf ibn 'Abd al-Mu'min. The manuscript (Paris B.N. arabe 1451) is dated 579 A.H./1183-4 A.D. that is, a half century after the death of Ibn Tumart.

⁴ *Le livre* p. 277.

⁵ J. F. P. Hopkins, *Medieval Muslim Government in Barbary*, London, Luzac, 1958 studies the Alhomad organizational structure.

⁶ E. Lévi-Provençal, *Documents inédits d'histoire Alhomade* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1928) vol. I p. 134-145.

⁷ This is from a version of this letter sent March 2, 1161 to Bougie (Bijaya). Levi-Provençal has reasoned on the basis of the existence of an identical letter sent to the talibs of Gibraltar after 1160, plus an allusion to what appears to be a similar letter in a letter written in 1143, that this letter was first written by Abu Ja'far Ibn Atiya and used repeatedly after his death. *Un Recueil de lettres officielles Alhomades*, Paris: Librairie Larose, 1942 p. 49.

⁸ Cf the section on *Miracle* in Madeleine Fletcher, *Western Islam: the Twelfth Century Renaissance*, South Carolina: U of S.C. Press, 1991.

⁹ *Le livre* p. 47.

¹⁰ Transl. George Hourani, *Agreement of Philosophy and Religion*, London: Luzac, 1961.

¹¹ Al-Baqillani (d.1013 A.D.), *Al-Bayan* (Beirut: Librairie Orientale, 1958) ed. R. J. McCarthy, paragraph 45 trans p. 17 Al-Baqillani mentions here his other writings on this subject: the introductions to books on *usūl al-fiqh*, and chapters on the "imputation of justice and injustice to God" in books on *usūl diyanat*. Unfortunately these have been lost.

¹² Wolfson substantiates his conclusions with textual examples comparing specific Arabic terms with their Greek counterparts *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Wolfson's work has not been used where it would have been illuminating. For example, Richard MacDonough Frank in his book *Beings and their Attributes*

(Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978) in the chapter on "The Background and Evolution of the Concept of the Attributes," has taken the use of grammar as determining the thought of the Basran Mu'tazila rather than as simply providing a paradigm for its expression, because he has not connected what they say with Wolfson's picture of the early Mu'tazilite objection to the attributes. What he quotes of them can still be interpreted in this light, for example (p. 12) "Ibn Kullab says that "the meaning of the statement 'God is knowing' is that an act of knowing belongs to Him" (*lahu 'ilmun*); that is to say, there is subsistent in Him (*qa'imun bihi*) an act of knowing by virtue of which He is said to be knowing." In the light of Wolfson's thesis we can see that the objections by abu l-Hudhayl to this formulation stem from its proximity to the notion of multiplicity in the Creator (the Trinity) which had been espoused by the Greek Christians from whom the early Islamic scholars had learned their theology.

¹³ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* p. 25-26. Wolfson's translation brings out the subject more explicitly than that of Rosenthal *Muqaddima* III p. 48.

¹⁴ On this point there is some confusion, more about the difference between Ash'arism and Mu'tazilism than about Ibn Tumart. George Makdisi discusses the groups in contention in fifth century Baghdad in a two part article on "Ash'ari and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History" *SI* 17 (1962) pp. 37-81, 18 (1963) pp. 19-39. He concludes that too much has been made of the Ash'arite-Mu'tazilite conflict, and sees this as the result of an attempt on the part of Ash'arite historians (Subki et al.) to present themselves as enemies of Mu'tazilism and thereby to become more popular. The lines drawn between Ash'arite and Mu'tazilite on different issues have been presented schematically by Louis Gardet and M. M. Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane*, Paris: J. Vrin, 1948 pp. 58-59. Ibn Tumart has been called an Ash'arite by Abd al-Wahid al-Marrakushi, *Kitab al-Mu'jib fi talkhis akhbar al-Maghrib*, Dozy ed., Leiden 1881 p. 134, and by Ibn Khaldun, *Histoire de Berbères* transl. de Slane Paris 1925 Vol. I p. 252-3 Vol. II p. 164. Although I. Goldziher called Ibn Tumart an Ash'arite in his introduction to *Le livre* pp. 54-55 and pp. 79-80, in another article, "Materialien zur Kenntnis der Alhomadbewegung", *ZDMG* XLI (1887) pp. 82-3 he is of the opinion that Ibn Tumart was a Mu'tazilite:

"Essentially, the founder of the Alhomad state was not a fully consequential Ash'arite, since only at the points where the teaching of al-Ash'ari differed from the Anthropomorphists did he stand on the ground of the Ash'arite school. In another principle question however, the answer to which framed the difference between the Ash'arite school and the Mu'tazilites; he is not a true follower of the Ash'arite teaching. I mean namely the teaching about the attributes of God. 'He declared', as a historian of the Alhomads relates, 'that he shared the doctrines of the school of Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, with the exception of the admission of the attributes (in God) *asifat* since with regard to the negation of those same attributes and in other points he agreed generally with the Mu'tazilites.' ... We have now seen, that Ibn Tumart was no consequential follower of the Ash'arite system. Not only with regard to the doctrine of the Attributes does he part company from the school's teaching not in favor of the Mu'tazila but in the direction of the doctrine held by Ibn Hazm, but in addition to that the pantheistic-sounding parts on the symbols of the creed that he formulated built a partition between him and Ash'arism."

¹⁵ Quoted from "Une fetwa d'Ibn Taimiya sur Ibn Tumart", *BIFAO* LIX (1960) p. 181. Asín Palacios also considers Ibn Tumart a Mu'tazilite "Origen y caracter de la revolución Alhomade" *Obras Escogidas*, Madrid: CSIS, 1948 p. 9.

[16] As this early date al-Ghazali also prefers the Mu'tazilites over the Ash'arites, placing them nearer the truth in his book *Mishkat al-Anwar* Wensinck *La pensée de Ghazali* p. 11.

[17] *'Aqīda* section 8, *Le livre* p. 233.

Another section 10 which adds to this point "The Creator is necessarily Living, Knowing, Powerful, endowed with will, hearing and speach, all that without our conceiving how this is so. Other Ash'arite differences with the Mu'tazila are emphasized in the *'aqīda*, in section 12, God's predestination and prescience as against Mu'tazilite Free Will.

In section 15 God's names are mentioned as in the *Murshida* and Ibn Hazm's principle is quoted that "One does not name the Creator except by the way He has named Himself in His Book or by the language of His Prophet."

[18] A. J. Wensinck, *La pensée de Ghazali*, Paris: Adrien-Maisonnueve, 1940 p. 13. Also p. 6 "The reasoning of Al-Ghazali is too related to a favorite idea of Neoplatonism for us to mistake the influence which it has had on our author. It is the idea of fundamental monism, excluding all plurality: the visible world, that is to say the whole of matter has only a secondary reality, the real reality being the exclusive prerogative of the One."

[19] Cf. Emile Brehier, *La Philosophie de Plotin*, Paris: J. Vrin, 1968. The fact that this mystical experience is the essence of the philosophy of Plotinus is often overlooked because of the Plotinian school's implicit and explicit connections with the (entirely different) philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. For several centuries Muslim philosophers confused Plotinus with his Helenistic predecessors and considered his philosophy to be "Aristotle's theology".

[20] R. C. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, New York: Schocken Books, 1969 gives a convincing analysis of the trance phenomenon in both Hinduism and Islam. It is entirely similar to the Christian *via unitativa*.

[21] For example A. Huici, *Historia política del imperio almohade* (Tetuan: Editora Marroqui, 1956) I p. 31: "Ibn Tumart is an extrovert, for whom divine love has no meaning; he is a man of faith, who gives his intelligence to the most sincere recognition of the grandeur and power of God, and at the same time a man of action, who only thinks of scrupulously obeying all the commands of an inaccessible God without his heart participating at all in this faith and this devotion." We have already pointed out the evidence of the *Murshida* for Ibn Tumarts being an ecstatic mystic. Even without this evidence, the growing popularity of Sufism at that time and Ibn Tumart's condition of life-long celebacy in a religious environment would make it highly unlikely in any terms that he would not have indulged in mystical practises.

[22] *Le livre* p. 234. There is a similar passage in the second *murshida Le livre* p. 241: "There is for Him neither before nor after, on top nor underneath, right nor left, in front nor behind, neither whole nor part." This shows that the statement is authentically that of Ibn Tumart, even though its placement in the *'aqīda* may be from a later date.

[23] E. Lévi-Provençal, ed. *Documents inédits d'histoire almohade*, Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1928 pp. 4-5 translation, p. 7.

[24] Of course anthropomorphism has its Neo-Platonic Christian expression in the doctrine of Incarnation which may be the source of the original oppositions to it.

[25] The Moroccan traveler Ibn Batuta (1304-1369) quotes an anthropomorphist statement by the famous Hanbalite Taqi al-Din Ibn Taimiyya:

"I was in Damascus at the time and attended the service which [Ibn Taimiyya] was conducting one Friday, as he was addressing and admonishing the people from the pulpit. In the midst of his discourse he said, "Verily, God descends to the sky over our world [from heaven] in the same bodily fashion that I make this descent", and stepped down one side of the pulpit." *Ibn Batuta, travels in Asia and Africa 1325-54* transl. H. A. R. Gibb, London: Routledge, 1929 pp. 67-68. But in Alexandria Ibn Taimiyya seems totally opposed to this stance, writing:

"Whoever claims ... that [God] descends as I descend myself ... is an erring, vile being, a negator of the law—more I would say he was an infidel": Laoust "Une *fetwa*" p. 176.

The simplistic idea that the Hanabalites remained totally literalist in their theology is challenged by the work of Merlin Swartz on Ibn al-Jawzi (d.1200) in his forthcoming edition of his book on the attributes, *Akhbar al-Sifat*.

[26] Ibn Hawqal, *Configuration de la terre* [Kitab Surat al-Ard] transl. J. H. Kramers and G. Wiet, Paris: Maisonneuve, 1964 Vol. I p. 90. Ibn Hawqal, originally from Bagdad, may possibly have been a Fatimid spy and as such would have reason to compare the Malikites of the Sus region unfavorably with the Shiites. Nevertheless Cf *Configuration* introduction p. XII.

[27] E. Lévi Provençal ed., *Docs inédits* p. 4 translation, p. 6.

[28] In the *'aqīda* the negative definition is considerably shortened and lightened.

[29] Quoted from Henri Laoust, "Une Fetwa d'Ibn Taimiya sur Ibn Tumart" *BIFAO* LIX (1960) pp. 177-8. It is interesting that Ibn Taimiyya uses his opponent's rules catching them in a supposed logical incoherence.

[30] The *'aqīda* section four states the argument based on Aristotle's *primum mobile*:

"By the first act, the existence of the Creator is recognized: the same as by the second and third to infinity. As for the heavens and the earth and the collectivity of created beings, one recognizes thanks to them the existence of the Creator; in the same way, His existence is recognized due to the contingency of the first movement, because this movement has necessarily need of an agent and because it is impossible for it to exist without an agent ..."

Of course the *'aqīda*, as we have said, is not necessarily Ibn Tumart's text.

[31] Evidence for this universalist claim is to be found in *Le livre* . For example:

"Chapter on the fact that *tawhīd* is the religion of the first and the last among the prophets and the messingers of God, and that the religion of the prophets is one."

This is followed by a koranic question and 2 hadiths on same subject (*Le livre* p. 277).

REVOLT AGAINST MODERNISM:

A note on some recent comparative studies in fundamentalism

Hans G. Kippenberg

Review article

Kodalle, Klaus-M. (Hg.), *Gott und Politik in den USA. Über den Einfluß des Religiösen. Eine Bestandsaufnahme.* Frankfurt: Athenäum 1988, 301 p., ISBN 3-610-08506-1;
Lawrence, Bruce, *Defenders of God. The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age.* San Francisco: Harper & Row 1989, 306 p. ISBN 0-06-250509-2;
Meyer, Thomas, *Fundamentalismus. Aufstand gegen die Moderne.* Reinbek: Rowohlt 1989, 216 p. ISBN 3-499-124149;
Meyer, Thomas, (Hg.), *Fundamentalismus in der modernen Welt. Die Internationale der Unvernunft.* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1989, 303 p., ISBN 3-518-11526-X;
Riesebrodt, Martin, *Fundamentalismus als patriarchalische Protestbewegung. Amerikanische Protestanten (1910-28) und iranische Schiiten (1961-79) im Vergleich.* Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr 1990, 292 p., ISBN 3-16-145669-6.

Scholars are paying more and more attention to fundamentalism. The notion itself is vague. Invented and self-applied by a party of American Protestants in 1920 it referred to a theological position promulgated between 1910 and 1915 in a series of booklets with the title "The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth". In addition to its established theological sense, journalists, in the last decade, have employed it as a label for describing the revival of Islam. Even though the non-theological concept of "fundamentalism" is problematic it can be refined for use in comparative studies.

Recently Th. Meyer condemned fundamentalism as the revolt of unreason against the "modern" world. According to Meyer, the claim of the enlightenment to create the autonomy of thought has become an unbearable burden for many. In particular those people subject more to the disadvantages than to the advantages of modernization seem to cling to the security and dependency of former times. In fact whenever the balance between the gains and the losses of modernity is upset, fundamentalism raises its head. Meyer's argument depends on a highly complex notion of the

enlightenment: he regards it at the same time as a nearly religious promise of future happiness by means of the use of pure reason and as the abandonment of all the certainties of life and thought. An impressive picture indeed. But by this philosophical interpretation the concept of fundamentalism loses entirely its distinct historical place in the twentieth century. Such a view will not increase our knowledge of fundamentalism. Instead we should draw a distinction between a criticism of enlightenment and social movements of the twentieth century reconfirming the fundamentals of religions in a struggle against modern social structures such as industrialization, bureaucratization, and pluralism. The first item mentioned, the historical phenomenon of intellectuals criticizing the standardization of human life under the impact of modernization can be traced back to the eighteenth century when philosophers (and theologians) defended religion (medieval and ''primitive'') against the charges of ignorance and ideology launched against them. Instead religion was called upon as witness against the conviction that progress and reason govern history. Partially due to the fact that this critique became part of western culture secularization did not cause a decline in religion but, on the contrary, resulted in its increasing influence. In fact, religions competed for potential participants in search of meaning. Though the official religions lost their institutionally privileged positions they responded to human needs by supplying systems of meaning. Secularization led to pluralism. Quite some time ago Berger and Luckmann elaborated on this subject ('Secularization and Pluralism'. *Internationales Jahrbuch für Religionssoziologie* 2, 1966, pp. 73-86) and it may be worthwhile to take up their theoretical framework in analyzing fundamentalism rather than the approach suggested by Meyer because accusing fundamentalism of relapsing into unreason makes it all too weak and foolish an enemy.

We have to make a distinction between a religious critique of reason and progress and the social movements of the twentieth century supported by people in defense of their traditional way of life and their communal interactions. The interrelation between modern revolutions and traditional communities was analyzed a short while ago by C. J. Calhoun in an essay ''The Radicalism of Tradition: Community Strength of Venerable Disguise and Bor-

rowed Language'' (*American Journal of Sociology* 88, 1983, pp. 886-914). Calhoun's study demonstrates that the fusion of revolution and tradition was independent of an intellectual critique of modern culture referring to religion. Though intellectuals sometimes linked both activities in fomenting revolution (particularly in Islamic countries), the reconfirmation of tradition has a different scope than that of religion.

Martin E. Marty in his recent lecture to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (*Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 42, 1988, pp. 15-29) proposed the study of fundamentalism as an observable social phenomenon. He argued that to identify fundamentalism with concepts of biblical inerrancy is a barren approach which ignores fundamentalism's most crucial elements. After describing what fundamentalism is not, Marty describes what it is, namely, a reactive movement involving a tendency to select certain but not all religious doctrines as fundamentals. This movement emphasizes exclusivism, fosters a dyadic Manichaean world view militating against relativism and pluralism, supports authority and rejects the theory of evolution. Developing a scientific concept of fundamentalism permits the scholar to distinguish it from both religious orthodoxy and political conservatism. In the first instance it demonstrates a penchant for selective attention to those ''fundamentals'' apt for mass-mobilizations, in the second it exemplifies an expectation of a radical new world. Marty stresses two distinct elements in fundamentalism, namely, that it is more than a religious view and that it includes intelligent people who sense a spiritual vacuum which competitive cultural agencies are incapable of satisfying. ''Fundamentalists are not always poor, uneducated people who rationalize their hopeless lower-class circumstances through a religious movement... It is among the university-educated and professionally mobile Jews, Mormons, Muslims and others that fundamentalism grows.''

In the last few years a small but impressive stream of comparative research in fundamentalism has grown (e.g. L. Caplan (ed.), *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism*. Hamsphire: Macmillan 1987, 216 p., ISBN 0-333-41974-X £ 35). This research testifies to the ability of our science to address new subjects and to raise new questions. Among recent publications two employ an approach

characteristic of some aspects of the history of religions. The first of these is *Defenders of God* by Bruce Lawrence. Lawrence tells the story of fundamentalism as part of a drama with two acts, the emergence of the modern world (which he calls the *context*) and the Jewish, Christian and Islamic reactions to the modernist vision (which he calls *countertexts*). Lawrence's discussion is most illuminating and he uses his thorough knowledge of both context and countertexts to substantiate a comparative analysis. In the first part of the book he introduces the crucial distinction between modernity (which he defines as increasing bureaucratization and rationalization) and modernism (which he defines as the search for individual autonomy). Fundamentalists would not exist without the modern world. They reject not modernity but modernism. Lawrence's argument confirms how crucial the distinction between social system and culture as source of meanings really is.

The second part of Lawrence's book states that it is the legacy of monotheistic traditions that authorizes the fundamentalist world view and provides its foundational idea. Lawrence discusses, first, ''The Living Word from the Eternal God'' and proceeds to analyze Jewish, Protestant, and Islamic fundamentalism. Lawrence's thesis reveals strengths and weaknesses. It discloses new but ignored meanings connected with the monotheistic religions in our century, but removes from scholarly focus those religious phenomena that belong to the same realm: the Hindu revivalism observable in the practice of *sati* (the burning of widows) described by L. P. van den Bosch in his article in *NUMEN* last year (37, 1990, pp. 174-194). Lawrence defends this limitation by maintaining that only in the monotheistic traditions was a fundamentalist protest against modernism. The main problem with this argument is the notion of tradition.

It is at this crucial point in the discussion that M. Riesebrodt's new book becomes relevant. In this volume he presents a comparative study of American and Iranian fundamentalism. His approach is derived from Max Weber. Riesebrodt's study integrates a historical and sociological perspective. He commences by defending the value of a comparative approach involving the study of two fundamentalist movements. He wants to develop a conceptual framework that transcends both the believers's point of view and prejudicial approaches to fundamentalism.

In both cases of fundamentalism Riesebrodt discerns certain phases. In the United States Protestantism was divided during World War I into a liberal and a fundamentalist wing which division led to a religious conflict between the wings. In time this religious conflict developed into a social one. The social conflict was evident in the movement against the teaching of Darwin's evolutionary theory in the public schools as well as against the diseases of alcoholism and prostitution. By 1925, however, a retreat from the public sphere occurred. The fundamentalists now formed a definite party that not only stressed its differences with the liberals and the so-called social gospel, but also excluded the black charismatic churches. From 1970 on this fundamentalist party became active again. Riesebrodt uses these phases to introduce some new and prolific concepts for explaining the facts. First he speaks about the ideology of fundamentalism. Riesebrodt interprets the experiences that some protestants underwent in the processes of the urbanization and industrialization of American society in terms of an apocalyptic expectation: the return of Christ will happen at the beginning of the millennium and not at the end. For that reason it does not make sense to improve social conditions. On the contrary the present situation grows even worse due to the conspiracy of demonic forces. Only a reform of morality and not the social gospel is on the agenda. This ideology answered the experiences of people losing their status and reputation by the rise of the modern economical and political organizations and structures. For this reason Riesebrodt adds the notion of agents to the notion of ideology. These agents represent a homogeneous stratum of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASP) economically based in small business and living together in local communities. By identifying themselves as fundamentalists they transformed their life-style into a "sozialmoralisches Milieu" of its own. It reinforced the typical experiences of status-dissonances made by many members of the American middle class during this century. Threatened by continuing social change they clung to a pessimistic interpretation of history. But they did not retreat from the world. On the contrary they could always be mobilized and motivated to engage in political action. According to Riesebrodt fundamentalism is closely linked with the differentiation of two social and moral milieus among

white American Protestants and corresponds to the rise of a liberal social milieu of its own. While liberal Protestants adapted their way of life to the modern structures, fundamentalist Protestants defended their traditional way of life against them. Under the threat of social change a traditional milieu was forced to defend itself.

Riesebrodt employs a similar framework of analysis for the case of Iran. Besides the huge differences between Protestant and Islamic fundamentalism there are some similarities. In the case of Iran there are also phases similar to the American situation, namely a polarization of Iranian society into a traditional and modern sector, the traditional sector being mobilized in defense of the traditional way of life. There also occurred a differentiation between charisma and the holy writ as a focus for orientation among fundamentalists themselves. Similar to the United States the middle class of Iran experienced a loss of status and reputation, and felt a sense of obligation to defend its lifestyle against westernization.

All of these studies present surprising new approaches to a controversial phenomenon in our century. By studying fundamentalism carefully in a comparative frame of reference the various authors discover behind a seemingly irrational phenomenon a particular type of religious reaction to modernization and point to the semantics and pragmatics of these religions in our century in a convincing manner.

BOOK REVIEWS

PETER SCHÄFER (Hg.), *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*. Teil III. Tüb-
   ingen: J. C. B. Mohr 1989 (XLIII, 339 p.) ISBN 3-16-145565-7 DM
   98.—

   The publication of vol. III of Peter Schäfer's *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-
Literatur* (J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen 1989) brings this monumental scholarly
endeavor to the halfway mark. The two volumes, II and III, contain some
of the most important works of ancient Jewish mysticism: Hekhalot Rab-
bati, Hekhalot Zutarti and Ma'aseh Merkabah, and this is their first
reliable and accurate translation into an European language. This series
of translations should be viewed as adding a whole library of intensely
religious works to the study of one of the most hectic and multifaceted
periods of religious thoughs in human history, the one which produced the
Old Testament apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic literature, the Kumran
sectarian literature, the Mishnah and Midrahs, the New Testament and
early Christian literature, early gnostic literature, and the Hekhalot
mystical library, all during the few centuries between the 2nd century
B.C. and the 3rd or 4th CE.
   The series of translations is another layer of one of the greatest scholarly
projects undertaken in this generation in Judaic studies. Peter Schäfer and
his colleagues and assistants in the Free University of Berlin started this
project more than a decade ago, resulting, first, in the publication of the
Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur (J. C. B. Mohr, 1981). In this work the seven
most important medieval manuscripts of Hekhalot literature are
presented in a synoptic fashion, in columns, each beside the other, so that
the reader can compare, at a glance, these key seven versions of the cen-
tral works of the ancient Jewish mystics. For this endeavor a special com-
puter program was developed, which assisted in the arrangement of the
material and was helpful in the subsequent stages of the project. The
accurate copying of the texts, which is very difficult when dealing with
manuscripts which contain long lists of angelological *nomina barbara* and
magical formulae, gave a firm basis to the textual study of this field.
Schäfer continued this phase of the project by the publication of *Geniza-
Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (ibid., 1984). In this volume Schäfer
presented 23 fragments from the geniza collections in many libraries,
some of them previously published and some of them printed for the first
time, which are related to Hekhalot mysticism. Those which have

parallels in the texts included in the *Synopse* were printed in a synoptic fashion. The third stage of the project produced the two great volumes of the *Concordanz zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (ibid., 1986, 1988): A comprehensive concordance for every word, name and lettercombination in the *Synopsis* and the *Geniza fragments*. With this, the Hebrew texts became available for scholarly study in the best possible fashion. The current phase of the project, the translation, will open this vast treasury of material for the non-Hebrew reader. The publication of the first volume was deferred, because the text involved, ''Third Enoch'' or ''The Hebrew Book of Enoch'' or the ''Hebrew Apocalypse of Enoch'' was translated twice into English; by Hugo Odeberg (Cambridge, 1928, 2nd. edition with a prolegommenon by J. C. Greenfield, Ktav, New York 1973) and Philip Alexander (in: James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. I, Doubleday, New york 1983, pp. 223-316). This is why Schäfer started this project with the publication of the second volume (ibid., 1987), which is followed now by the third.

Several other works were published at the same time, augmenting and complementing the main textual work. An important ancient text, ''The Story of the Ten Martyrs'', which is related to a key section of Hekhalot Rabbati, was published in a synoptic edition, to which a translation and commentary were added, by Gottfried Reeg (ibid., 1985); and recently a collection of Schäfer's studies was published, some of them dealing with major textual and reductional problems of Hekhalot mysticism (*Hekhalot-Studien*, ibid., 1989). Combined, all this presents the scholarly community with a most impressive achievement in the study of a hitherto-neglected large body of Jewish texts, and facilitating further scholarly study of them, basing it on firm textual grounds.

The main problem facing a translation of these texts is the fact that large segments of them are obscure and difficult, if not impossible, to understand at this stage of the research in the field. In some cases, the translator is required to render into another language a text which is not understood. When this occurs, there are two serious questions facing the scholar: One is that of the correct reading, when the various versions in the manuscripts cannot be checked according to the general context and meaning of the section. The second, more serious one, is, that in such a case it is difficult to choose the relevant meaning of a term from the various possibilities, and certainly not to suggest a variant meaning which fits the context. This difficulty is especially serious in Hekhalot literature because of the nature of the language used: The treatises of this literature are written in rabbinic Hebrew, mostly tannaitic and early-amoraic. But the Hekhalot mystics did develop (or used from sources unknown) a

special vocabulary for their terminology, descriptions and hymnology, which often presents different meanings from those of rabbinic Hebrew, even when using the same words. For instance, they may have had in their possession Hebrew versions of apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic works which were preserved only in Greek or other languages, or were completely lost.

One example can illustrate the two problems: In the beginning of *Hekhalot Zutarti* Rabbi Akibah reveals a secret holy name, which is inteded to serve his disciples so that they never forget what they learn. This purpose is clearly stated twice (at the end of sections 336 and 340). The name, therefore, is a mnemonic formula, and is connected to the *Sar Torah* traditions, one of the subjects dealt with in several treatises of the Hekhalot literature. While the answer is relatively clear, the question is not. The holy name is intended for every person whose heart is ''shogeh'' or ''shoneh''; the manuscripts are divided in their reading of this word, and in Hebrew they are written in a very similar way, so that the distinction is difficult. Schäfer translated ''erred'' for ''shogeh'', which is the literal, usual meaning, and ''learned'' for ''shoneh'', which is also accurate (pp. 3, 6). But the context denotes that the correct reading is ''shogeh'', and its specific meaning here is ''forgetful'', to conform with the answer — the mnemonic formula (see also R. Elior, *Hekhalot Zutarti*, Jerusalem 1982, p. 61, note to lines 10-11).

Schäfer chose, in his translation, to refrain from writing an extensive commentary, which would explain the various possibilities and present in detail his choice of meaning to be translated. He adhered in this volume to the principle that guided his work in the previous stages of this project: A strict separation between textual presentation and the analysis of the content, refraining from any emendations or changes for any reason. This correct method is applied more easily to the presentation of the Hebrew text than to a translation, because translation, necessarily, includes an element of interpretation. Brief explanations and parallels, however, accompany almost every line of the translation, so that the scholar can follow the reasoning of the translator. In most cases Schäfer chose to adhere strictly to the most literal layer of meaning, which is understandable in these circumstances (see especially his explanation on p. XLIII, section 3.2).

The reader of this volume will find the Hekhalot texts extremely difficult; still, a major step towards the opening of these early mystical texts for scholars in the fields of religion and mysticism has been made. The next step, when this series is completed, is the detailed commentary on every segment of the texts and their inclusion in the comprehensive picture of the religious developments in the Near East in Late Antiquity.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem   JOSEPH DAN

J. M. S. BALJON, *Religion and thought of Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī (1703-1762)*. Leiden: Brill 1986 (IX, 221 p.) ISBN 90 04 07684 0 f 70.—

The book under review sets out to survey and analyze the religious thought of Shāh Walī Allāh (1703-1762), one of the most celebrated thinkers of Indian Islam. In contradistinction to earlier intepretations which tended to focus on Walī Allāh as the thinker who diagnosed the malaise of the Mogul empire, brought about the reconciliation of various trends in Islamic thought and even played a major political role, Professor Baljon concentrates on the thought of Walī Allāh as such and does not forge any significant connection between him and the political and social condition of India in the 18th century. In his preface, he explicitly raises doubts about the alleged political role of Walī Allāh. Having reached similar conclusions with regard to the political role of another Indian Muslim thinker, Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (1564-1624), and being aware of the problematic nature of the material used in support of Walī Allāh's political involvement, this reviewer agrees with Baljon's remarks (p. VII). It must be pointed out, however, that the author does refute the conventional view of Walī Allāh's political role;[1] the book is concerned solely with his religious thought.[2]

A major achievement of this work is its novel description of the intellectual personality of Walī Allāh. Baljon introduces us to Walī Allāh the philosopher and the religious thinker, and his book is an irrefutable testimony that Walī Allāh indeed was, first and foremost, such a person. We are systematically introduced to subjects such as metaphysics, psychology, mysticism, ethics and numerous other topics in the field of Muslim religious thought. With a thinker as difficult as Shāh Walī Allāh, this is not an easy thing to do, and those who have had an opportunity to deal with similar types of material will be able to appreciate fully Professor Baljon's work. The classification of Walī Allāh's thought in the various chapters of the book is also of great and lasting value. It is a far cry from several previous accounts in which the political and social involvement of Shāh Walī Allāh was given disproportionate and sometimes exclusive attention.

The book begins with a bio-bibliographical essay which deals with the events of Shāh Walī Allāh's life, his religious upbringing and his literary output. The result is somewhat disappointing; except for the books which he wrote after his return from the Ḥijāz in 1732, we do not hear anything about Walī Allāh's life in this period. Only a terse statement, abruptly placed at the end of a bibliographical paragraph (p. 14), notifies the reader of the date of Shāh Walī Allāh's death.

The bibliographical section (pp. 8-14) makes an attempt to establish a

chronology of Walī Allāh's works. Baljon differs in several details from the chronology established earlier by S. A. A. Rizvi[3], but he makes no reference to Rizvi's work here. Some of Walī Allāh's works mentioned in the list have not been used in the book, though the reader is provided with a characterization of their contents. This reviewer would be particularly interested in the contents of a book entitled *Muqaddima dar fann-i tarjamayi Qur'ān*, which is described by Baljon as including "directions for translators of the Qur'ān" (p. 11); the feasibility and legality of translating the Qur'ān has always been a problem in Islamic thought and it would be fascinating to know what were the directions which Walī Allāh gave to the prospective translators.[4] Incidentally, *fann* in the title of this book should not be understood as "art", but rather as "(literary) genre".

The perusal of Baljon's book leaves no doubt that Shāh Walī Allāh was an author whose thought requires a great deal of elucidation. He was evidently influenced by numerous streams of Islamic thought in the earlier centuries: al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-ʿArabī seem to be among the chief sources of his inspiration. His style is far from clear, and his Arabic is very different from that of writers for whom Arabic was their mother tongue. The scholar dealing with this type of material must make some basic decisions regarding the method of his endeavour. He can either treat the material as a corpus of thought to be investigated as it stands, without paying much attention to the various influences that can be discerned in it or he can make an attempt to identify the writer's sources of inspiration, to assess the way in which he incorporated them into his work and thereby to evaluate his originality or dependence on earlier thinkers. Such decisions are particularly important when dealing with late Islamic material which naturally tends to include more ideas derived from earlier generations.

By and large Professor Baljon has chosen the first alternative. He does, of course, refer to Muslim thinkers whom Shāh Walī Allāh himself mentioned in his works, and gives numerous references to *hadith* collections in the appropriate places, but rarely do we find independent analyses of the similarities or differences between Walī Allāh and thinkers such as al-Ghazālī or Ibn al-ʿArabī. Exceptions can be found, for instance on p. 48, note 37, and p. 50, note 44 where influences of the Ikhwan al-Safaʾ and of Ibn al-ʿArabī are discussed. Another exception is in the short epilogue which has a brief discussion of Ibn Taymiyya's influence on Shāh Walī Allāh's interdiction of tomb worship and pilgrimages to holy places (pp. 200-201). Baljon's statement regarding Ibn Taymiyya's influence in this respect may be correct; however, it seems to be out of proportion in singling out Ibn Taymiyya in the concluding chapter of the book, creating

thereby the impression that he was one of the most important sources of Walī Allāh's thought: the book itself contains ample evidence that this is not so and that thinkers such as al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-ʿArabī played a much more important role in this respect.

It should be pointed out that this method implicitly tends to ascribe to Shāh Walī Allāh more originality than he deserves. Chapter 2 (pp. 21-35) is written as if Walī Allāh was the first Muslim thinker to elaborate concepts such as *ʿālam al-mithāl, ḥaẓīrat al-quds, ʿālam al-jabarūt, al-malaʾ al-aʿlā* and others. The brief references to al-Ghazālī, Ibn al-ʿArabī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī in the footnotes do not materially alter this impression. Professor Baljon knows, of course, that these concepts have had a long history in Islamic religious thought before being taken up by Shāh Walī Allāh, but the method which he chose for his presentation is bound to create a misleading impression in readers who are not experts in the field. And while discussing Walī Allāh's claim to have been nominated as *nāṭiq* and *waṣī* (p. 19), is it really adequate to make a laconic remark in a footnote saying that these are "terms" with very special associations in Ismaʾili thought?" Does Walī Allāh's use of these terms not call for further comment?

Unwarranted attributions of originality are sometimes made even in an explicit fashion. A case in point is Baljon's treatment of Walī Allāh's views on prophetic miracles. We are told (on p. 105) that prophetic miracles were adapted to the spirit of the age: since people in the time of Moses were fond of magic, God provided Moses with miracles of the staff and the white hand; in the time of Muḥammad people were renowned for poetry and rhetorics and God therefore sent down the miracle of the Qurʾān. Professor Baljon says that this is a very important view of Shāh Walī Allāh, because it undermines western criticism according to which Islam "would not know of a God who is continuously acting in the history of men". The truth of the matter is that this idea was not conceived by Walī Allāh and should not be ascribed to him. It is taken from the literature concerning the dogma of the inimitability of the Qurʾān (*iʿjāz al-qurʾān*). In order to be most effective and convincing, prophetic miracles are performed in the field in which the people concerned excel most: Pharaoh's Egypt was known for its excellent magicians, and Moses was therefore given magical ability which even they could not match. Similarly, Jesus was given the miracles of healing those of whom the contemporary physicians despaired, though their profession supposedly was in his times on a very high level. Among the Arabs, who were known for their excellent literary style, the stylistically inimitable Qurʾān was the miracle of choice.[5]

This reviewer noted an instance in which lack of reference to Shāh Walī Allāh's sources leads to a serious misunderstanding. Speaking of Ibn al-ᶜArabī, Professor Baljon says (on p. 121, note 15) that he "established the foundation for esoteric prophethood and abolished legislative prophethood (which remained in existence) after (the death of) the Seal of the Prophets". Walī Allāh's text reads: ...*wa yubrimu ᶜalā ithbāt al-nubuwwa al-bāṭiniyya wa inqiṭāᶜ al-nubuwwa al-tashrīᶜiyya baᶜda khātam al-anbiyāʾ*.[6] This means that Ibn al-ᶜArabī affirmed the existence of esoteric prophethood and the cessation of (only) legislative prophethood after the death of the Prophet. It is Ibn al-ᶜArabī's interpretation of the Muslim dogma concerning the finality of prophethood: the legislative kind of prophethood ceased with the completion of Muḥammad's mission, but the esoteric, or non-legislative, kind continues to exist.[7]

On p. 146 Professor Baljon deals with the question of abrogation of Qurʾānic verses (*naskh*) in Walī Allāh's thought. Speaking of the "occasions" for *naskh*, he mentions the subject of *jihād* and refers the reader to the well-known tradition of the Prophet, who is reported to have said after his return from a military expedition: "We have returned from the lesser *jihād* to the greater *jihād*." Baljon appears to maintain that according to the abrogation principle, the military struggle was substituted by man's internal struggle against his evil-bidding soul. This does not seem to be the correct interpretation. Islamic exegesis has long maintained that the various Qurʾānic pronouncements on *jihād* have to be understood in a chronological sequence: the early verses, in which *jihād* was forbidden or viewed as a defensive war only, were abrogated and replaced by those which enjoin an all-out aggressive war against the infidels.[8] It seems to me that Walī Allāh also refers to this *naskh*. He refers the reader to the eighth *khizāna*[9] where he speaks of the development of the ways in which the Prophet gave guidance to his contemporaries. In the beginning he could only guide those of his friends and faithful who approached him (and were willing to accept his guidance). His condition remained such for some time. Only later, when the Prophet's sublime innate nature became polished time and again, and the relevant stars expanded their orbits, became moons and later suns, he was told to wage *jihād* which is all-encompassing hostility (ᶜadāwa kulliyya). This hostility is an earthly manifestation of something holy which exists in the sublime world (..*wa-anna fī al-ᶜālam al-ᶜulwī amran ma qudsiyyan yakūnu maẓharuhu fī hādha al-ᶜālam al-ᶜadāwa laysa illā*). This seems to be the correct interpretation of Walī Allāh's views on *naskh* in the realm of *jihād*: he introduced a cosmological element into the traditional description of the development of the *jihād* commandment. The tradition about the greater and the lesser *jihād*, which also appears in the eighth *khizāna*[10], is mentioned in a different context.

Certain translations included in the book are either unacceptable or require at least some discussion in order to be convincing. *Al-nawādir min aḥādīth sayyid al-awāʾil wa al-awākhir* are not "Prophetic Traditions Relating Comical Tales" (p. 9) but, rather, rare prophetic traditions. Some explanation is necessary if we are to understand *dhawq* as "intuitive anticipation" (p. 36). The same applies to the translation of *al-rashīd* as "leader" (p. 39), and *wathīq* as "coarse" (p. 102). On the same page, it is doubtful whether *majāzī* can be understood as "earthy", and, in any case, al-Qāsimī's edition of the *Tafhīmat*[11] reads *ṣūra mizājiyya* and not *majāziyya*. The epithet of Abū ʿAbd Allāh, who is said to have reached the age of 400 years, was *al-muʾammar* rather than *al-muʾammir* (p. 9).

Another methodological issue which should be raised here is the amount of interpretation which the author deemed necessary to provide for the reader. Professor Baljon makes it clear in his preface (p. VII) that he intended to allow Shāh Walī Allāh to speak for himself whenever possible, and exercised "reticence ... with regard to intuitional but unsufficiently warranted inferences and surmises on the part of the researcher". The present reviewer has, of course, no quarrel with Professor Baljon regarding the crucial importance of the text in a scholarly endeavour of this kind. However, we are dealing with a writer whose thought is complex and at times abstruse. Many of his statements require substantial elucidation in order to be intelligible. To allow Shāh Walī Allāh "to speak for himself", without adding an interpretation necessary for the understanding of the reader who did not do the primary research himself, is a mixed blessing: Professor Baljon's English renditions of the Persian or Arabic texts are not necessarily more lucid than Shāh Walī Allāh's frequently mystifying originals.

We are furthermore bound to ask ourselves: is it not the scholar's task to delve more into the intellectual background of the works which he studies, to make a systematic attempt to distinguish between ideas which are original and those taken over from other, earlier authors, and, in our case, to assess as far as possible the degree to which Shāh Walī Allāh made an original contribution to Islamic thought?[12] Such an assessment can not be made without adequate and systematic reference to the philosophical and religious corpus which constituted the intellectual world of Shāh Walī Allāh. The task is not easy, but it is an integral and essential part of scholarship in this field.

Institute of Oriental Studies,   YOHANAN FRIEDMANN
Hebrew University, Jerusalem

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[1] But see p. 15, note 1.

² For the most recent discussion of Walī Allāh's alleged political influence, sup-
porting Baljon's view, see Muhammad al-Faruque, "Some aspects of Muslim
revivalist movements in India during the 18th century: the activities of Shāh Walī
Allāh of Delhi." *Islamic Culture* 63 (1989), pp. 19-41 (especially pp. 34-35).
³ *Shāh Walī Allāh and his times.* Canberra 1980, pp. 221-224.
⁴ For a survey of early Muslim views on this topic, see A. L. Tibawi, "Is the
Qur'ān translatable?" in his *Arabic and Islamic themes*, London 1976, pp. 72-85.
⁵ See Abū Bakr Muhammad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān.* Edited
by Ahmad Saqr. Dhakhā'ir al-ʿarab XII. Cairo 1954, p. 458.
⁶ See Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya.* Edited by Ghulām Mustafā al-Qāsimī,
Haydarābād (Sind) 1967, II, p. 34.
⁷ See Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūhāt al-Mākkiyya*, Cairo, n.d., II, p. 3.
⁸ See EI², s.v. *jihād.*
⁹ See *al-Khayr al-kathīr*, Cairo 1974, p. 86.
¹⁰ See *al-Khayr al-kathīr*, p. 88.
¹¹ Vol. II, p. 8-9.
¹² In a number of notes, the author himself indicated how this could be done.
See for instance p. 64, note 2, where the author suggests the source of Shāh Walī
Allāh's view of the "four humours" (*akhlāt*); and p. 198, note 14, where he
discusses the background of Walī Allāh's views on "professional immobility" in
the Indian society. See also p. 48, note 47; p. 49, note 43; and p. 50, note 44.

J. W. van Henten / B. A. G. M. Dehandschutter / H. J. W. van der
    Klaauw (eds.), *Die Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie.* Leiden: Brill
    1989 (VII, 271 p.) ISBN 90 04 08978 0 f 118.—

This is a collection of nine essays by mostly Dutch scholars on the sub-
ject of "The development of Jewish martyrology". As the editor explains
in the preface, these essays were initially papers delivered at a workshop,
meant to inspire discussion. The oral character of the original setting is
still preserved in the final section of the book where the participants sum-
marize and discuss their arguments. The form of the workshop also
allowed for a welcome diversity of opinions and a variety of approaches.
    The subject of this collection is a classic crux which has occupied
numerous scholars of various disciplines. The reasons for reopening the
discussion are highly laudable. The declared aim of this collection is to
shift the emphasis from a predominantly Christian or Classical approach
to a Judaic perspective and to examine the development of martyrology
both from a synchronic and a diachronic perspective. The editor more-
over adopts an attitude of open cautiousness which informs his conscien-
tious search for a definition of the phenomena.
    Yet it is not always clear whether the book fulfils the high standards to
which it aspires. At the outset it appears that the first and the short con-
tributions at the end do not sufficiently deal with the subject in question.
Thus, particularly J. F. Borghouts' paper fails to show how Egyptian

mythology is ultimately relevant to the human martyrs of second century Palestine.

Furthermore, the contributions are generally too narrowly focussed on (Jewish) Greek sources and their Hellenistic background and on European secondary literature. Given the declared aim of this collection, it is astonishing that the rabbinic evidence is not at all discussed in this context. Neither is a treatment of such texts as the *Testament of Abraham* or the *Testament of Moses* to be found. With regard to the biographies, one is impressed by the predilection for European research. American scholarship still receives some attention but Israeli research is hardly used, not even standard works translated into English such as E. E. Urbach's *The Sages*.

These general features are reflected in the individual contributions. The first two papers discuss the significance of *Daniel* for the development of martyrology. While E. Haag's presentation is a meticulous text-critical analysis of *Dan* 3:1-30, it refrains from adequately applying the results to the subject in question, U. Kellermann seems to use too many Christian prooftexts for the martyrological significance of Daniel. In both cases, the urgent need for an analysis of this ''literarische Vorstufe'' is highlighted.

L. Ruppert's short paper on the notion of the suffering servant examines a range of late biblical and Second Temple literature. His discussion focuses on the motif of the external threat to the righteous as an expression of his special election by God. In particular, he treats the relevant passages in *Sap* and their relation to *Jes* 53. His comparisons, though sometimes speculative, are generally well-founded and he succeeds in showing the prevalence of the theme and its importance in intellectual Jewish history.

Both in terms of its length and its weight J. C. H. Lebram's contribution constitutes the central piece of this collection. After he pointed to the parallels between IV *Macc* and the Hellenistic burial speech in an earlier work, he now turns his attention to the specifically Jewish notions that serve these Greek traditions. Thus he investigates the spiritual connection between Jewish martyrology and Hebrew wisdom literature (including *Dan*). he convincingly shows the ''gemeinsame theologische Grundkonzeption'' (p. 93) between the notion of the righteous and the martyr. Both of them are put to trial for their convictions and are, to their opponents surprise, saved by their faith. The texts also share some literary motifs, such as the court environment, and some theological assumptions, such as the belief in providence underlying the events of this world. An obvious difference between these genres is the fact that in the wisdom texts the righteous are not actually put to death.

Drawing on his historiographical research on the *books of Maccabees*, J. W. van Henten examines the world view of these documents. His remarks tend, especially at the beginning, to overdo paraphrasing the contents of the various documents. Although his conclusion that the martyrs are seen as the ideal representatives of the people is convincing, his discussion centers too narrowly on cultural notions; and the term ''Selbstverständnis'' should more often have been replaced by ''value'', ''religious conviction'', ''belief'' etc.

H. S. Versnel's ''Bemerkungen'' on Hellenistic versus Jewish aspects of the notion of ''effective death'' are preliminary remarks intended to outline directions for research. He suggests a systematic evaluation of such Hellenistic genres as the mystery and the emperor cults and points to Greek origins for the idea of the individual's death as a substitute for the whole community. Although the author is aware of the speculative nature of his remarks, he decides in favour of these Hellenistic ''influences'', thus overlooking obvious differences such as the voluntary and idealised nature of the sacrifice in the Jewish traditions.

Like the other contributions Versnel's essay renews our interest in the subject and hopefully will encourage new research.

Harvard University   Maren Niehoff
78 Mount Auburn Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Thomas E. Wood, *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad and the Āgama Śāstra: an Investigation into the Meaning of the Vedānta*. Monographs of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, no. 8. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990. xvi + 240 pages. $ 14.00.

This monograph is a closely argued study of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, a late *śruti* text dealing with the four states of consciousness (waking, dream, dreamless sleep, and the ''fourth'' state beyond all the above) in relation to the mystical syllable *Oṃ* (analyzed into its components, A-U-M). THe *Māṇḍūkya* often appears together with 29 *kārikā* verses attributed by the Śaṅkaran advaitic tradition to Gauḍapāda, the teacher of Śaṅkara's teacher; this combined text, known as the *Āgamaprakaraṇa*, is itself joined to three other *prakaraṇas* to form a larger work, the so-called *Āgamaśāstra*. A commentary on the latter, the *Āgamaśāstravivaraṇa*, is traditionally ascribed to Śaṅkara himself.

Dr. Wood attacks this picture of the sources as presented to us by the tradition on several levels. On the basis of a detailed reading of the *mantras, kārikās*, and commentary, he argues, convincingly, that 1) the

Āgamaśāstra is not a unitary work but a compilation of four short, originally separate treatises; 2) this collection was put together by the earliest commentator, the author of the *vivaraṇa*, 3) who, however, was *not* Śaṅkara. Moreover, 4) the ascription to Gauḍapāda of the *Āgamaprakaraṇa* in its entirety, not to mention the other three *prakaraṇas*, is not well grounded. These conclusions are likely to stand. More controversial is the major thrust of Wood's argument, that would replace a strict *advaitic* reading of the Upaniṣad with a more theistic one: *īśvara*, the god of creation, would thereby be associated with the fourth, ultimate level of consciousness and being, so that the latter can assume personal form, while the created world *cannot* be an illusion. The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, in short, does not teach *Māyāvāda*.

In itself, this line of reasoning is far from shocking: *advaita* illusionism, of the extreme medieval type, is generally foreign to the classical Upaniṣads; parallels cited by Wood from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the *Chāndogya*, and the *Maitrī* do point to a similar conclusion for the *Māṇḍūkya*. Indeed, these parallel passages are, on the whole, far more persuasive for Wood's position than the energies he brings to bear on the *Māṇḍūkya* text proper, and the logical division of its *mantras*; the evidence he marshals from existing printed editions is unsatisfying (pp. 44-45), while the Śrīvaiṣṇava commentator Kūranārāyaṇa, whom Wood cites in support of his reading (pp. 54-55), clearly had his own (theistic) axe to grind. Wood's concluding reconstruction of the textual history of the *Āgamaśāstra*, and of the motivations of its various authors (pp. 138-45), is marred by strangely far-fetched argumentation, hardly less rigid than that of any *advaita*-oriented commentator; and to cap it all, a final section offers a more general philosophical attack on *advaita*, very unsympathetically portrayed, to the point where one is led to wonder whether an initial bias does not underly the analysis of the Upaniṣadic text. This is a case where the author has overreached himself, to the detriment of what might otherwise have been unexceptional conclusions.

P. 141 offers an astounding misunderstanding of Viṣṇu's avatar as the Buddha; how, we are asked, could Vaiṣṇavas have tolerated a vision of their god as a teacher of heresy, eager to deceive people with non-Vedic doctrines? But that, of course, is precisely what the *purāṇic* versions of the story want to show: here, as in other avatars, Viṣṇu successfully and deliberately deceives the pious demon-enemies of the gods, thereby paving the way for the demons' destruction. The existence of *human* "heretics," of the Buddhist and Jaina varieties, is no more than an unfortunate spill-over from this cosmic drama, as the *Śivapurāṇa* (among other texts) clearly states. Jayadeva's more positive vision of the Buddha-avatar, as an embodiment of compassion and of resistance to animal

sacrifice, is very much an anomaly; and only in late-medieval, south Indian (usually Śaiva) texts do we find a moralizing condemnation of Viṣṇu's proselytization of the *asuras*.

One is glad to have the Sanskrit text of the *Āgamaśāstra* included at the end of the book. There are the inevitable misprints: p. xvi, *alata* for *alāta*; p. 130, *yatīndraya* for *yatīndrāya*. And it would surely be better to translate *bhogārthaṃ* and *krīḍārtham* in *AP* 9 as "[creation is] for the sake of enjoyment" or "for the sake of play" rather than the largely incomprehensible "Creation is the object of enjoyment" (p. 5).

Dept. of Comparative Religion,   DAVID SHULMAN
Hebrew University

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Oriental Responses to the West

Comparative Essays in Select Writers from the Muslim World

Nasrin Rahimieh

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ISBN 90 04 09177 7   Gld. 65.—/US$ 37.25

Modern writers and scholars from the Islamic East have represented actual or fictional encounters with the West in a surprising variety of ways. Far from constituting a monolithic approach to the West, as Western "Orientalism" often tended to, these writings reveal an interest in and sometimes acute perception of cross-cultural conflict and synthesis. The very difficulties experienced by writers and critics immersed in two or more cultures have led to new creative and innovative forms of response to the West.

By shifting focus in East-West relations towards the east, this study initiates further interdisciplinary discussions.

Readership: Orientalists and all those concerned with cross-cultural and literary studies.

Dr. Nasrin Rahimieh is a Canada Research Fellow at The University of Alberta.

Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa and the Mahābhārata: a new interpretation

Bruce M. Sullivan

Authorship of the great Sanskrit language epic poem of India, the Mahābhārata, is attributed to the sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa. This study focuses on the depiction of Vyāsa in the Mahābhārata, where he is an important character in the tale he is credited with composing.

Other scholars have interpreted Vyāsa as an incarnation of Nārāyana Viṣṇu. This study, however, demonstrates that he is so depicted only very rarely in the epic, and that elsewhere the Mahābhārata portrays Vyāsa as corresponding meaningfully with Brahmā. Vyāsa is, in fact, the earthly counterpart to Brahmā in the Mahābhārata, as Kṛṣṇa is of Viṣṇu, etc. The interpretation of Vyāsa is enriched by the different perspectives provided by other literature, including dramas, Jātaka tales, Arthasāstra, and Purāṇas.

Readership: the book will appeal to historians of religion as well as all who are interested in Indian literature and the Mahābhārata in particular.

Visible Religion

Annual for Religious Iconography
Volume VII: Genres in Visual Representations

Edited by H. G. Kippenberg (ed.-in-chief), L. P. van den Bosch,
L. Leertouwer and H. A. Witte

Readership: students and scholars of religious iconography.

THE KOYUKON BEAR PARTY
AND THE "BARE FACTS" OF RITUAL

Benjamin C. Ray

Summary

Jonathan Smith's recent interpretation of the classic "bear festival" among northern hunters is examined, together with his more general theory of ritual. Smith's interpretation of the bear festival is shown to be unfounded. The paper also investigates the well-documented bear rituals of the Koyukon of Alaska in light of Smith's general theory of ritual. Viewed in the context of other theories of ritual as symbolic action (those of Geertz, Douglas, Valeri, Turner, Eliade), Smith's theory is found to be unsuited to the task of understanding the meaning and significance of Koyukon bear rituals. The paper argues that the interpretation of ritual requires the investigator to attend to the ritualist's notion of reality and to grasp how his beliefs and actions are fitted to it. The investigator should be concerned with questions of meaning not empirical validity, as the problem of understanding ritual is a semantic and semiotic one, analogous to understanding the cognitive and performative uses of a language. The magical or instrumental aspect of the Koyukon bear rituals is also dealt with as an instance of performative language.

In an important article titled "The Bare Facts of Ritual" Jonathan Smith brings to light what he believes to be a contradiction in the classic ethnography on bear hunting among northern hunting societies.[1] "There appears," says Smith, "to be a gap, an incongruity between the hunters' ideological statements of how they *ought* to hunt and their actual behavior while hunting."[2] After pointing out apparent discrepancies between what the hunters say and what they do, Smith proposes to find out how "*they* [the hunters] resolve this discrepancy" for, he asserts, "we must presume that *he* [the hunter] is aware of this discrepancy, that he works with it, that he has some means of overcoming this contradiction between word and deed."[3]

Smith finds the resolution to the contradiction to lie in the well-known bear festivals performed by some of these hunting groups. In these ceremonies a bear cub is captured, kept in captivity for a period of time, and then ritually killed. Acknowledging that

previous interpretations of the bear festival have been illuminating in some respects, Smith suggests another: *"The bear festival represents a perfect hunt."*[4] That is, under the controlled circumstances of the ritual context the bear festival enacts the kind of hunt that the hunters recognize can never happen in the bush:

> The ritual displays a dimension of the hunt that can be thought about and remembered in the course of things. It provides a focusing lens on the ordinary hunt which allows its full significance to be perceived, a significance which the rules express but are powerless to effectuate. It is in ritual space that the hunter can relate himself properly to animals which are both "good to eat" and "good to think."[5]

"It is conceivable," says Smith, "that the northern hunter, while hunting, might hold the image of this perfect hunt in his mind."[6] Thus, the "contradiction" between word and deed is overcome.

Smith offers this interpretation of the bear festival as an example of an important understanding of ritual.

> *Ritual is a means of performing the way things ought to be in conscious tension to the way things are in such a way that this ritualized perfection is recollected in the ordinary, uncontrolled, course of things.* Ritual relies for its power on the fact that it is concerned with quite ordinary activities, that what it describes and displays is, in principle, possible for every occurrence of these acts. But it relies, as well, for its power on the perceived fact that, in actuality, such possibilities cannot be realized.[7]

Despite careful articulation, however, Smith's interpretation and the theory behind it raise several important questions: Why do the hunters deliberately say they hunt bear in ways they do not? Why should they cling to an "ideology" that contradicts their experience? What about the other more commonly performed bear rituals that accompany every kill? Are they also to be understood as obsessive attempts at "control," as efforts to make "perfect" the otherwise flawed experience of the hunt?

At the outset, it is important to agree with Smith that the bear hunter or the "primitive" is not to be dismissed as a creature living in a "cuckoo-land" where our own commonplace, commonsense understanding of reality does not apply. Thus we are obliged to find out why, if Smith is correct, the hunters' words and rituals "con-

tradict" their deeds. This he never explains, except to say that the hunters, like other ritualists, wish they could control a world that they recognize cannot be controlled.

Surprisingly, the sources on which Smith relies point, in fact, to *no* contradiction between the hunters' notions about the hunt and the methods the hunters use. The sources also suggest that the bear festival is not intended to be a "perfect hunt" but a celebration to which the bear is invited before being ritually dispatched. Moreover, since the bear festival is performed only among a few East Asiatic peoples, it can hardly be assumed that this rite influences the collective mind of the "northern hunter," as Smith suggests, for the vast majority of bear hunters on the Euroasian and North American continents know nothing of it.

It should be noted, however, that Smith's view of the bear festival is not offered as a fully developed interpretation. It treats only one aspect of the festival, the killing of the bear, and deals with only selected statements about bear hunting, not with thorough descriptions. Smith's view is therefore intentionally partial and hypothetical, an innovative suggestion about a certain tendency in the ethnography. By contrast, his theory of ritual is more developed, and receives additional treatment in his recent book *To Take Place* (1987). It therefore deserves to be examined on its own in relation to more detailed ethnography.

After reviewing the somewhat antiquated ethnography on which Smith relies, it will be useful to consider more recent accounts of bear rituals and to consider other theories that interpret ritual as symbolic action. Here I shall draw upon Richard K. Nelson's excellent study *Make Prayers to the Raven*,[8] which describes the hunting practices of the Koyukon of the northwestern interior of Alaska, and the well-known theories of ritual offered by Clifford Geertz, Mary Douglas, and Valerio Valeri. My aim is to see whether and to what extent the views of ritual, including Smith's, make the bear ceremonies of the Koyukon intelligible as symbolic action.

I

The accounts on which Smith primarily relies are A.I. Hallowell's classic study, *Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern*

Hemisphere (1926), and Eveline Lot-Falck's more recent survey, *Les Rites de chasse chez les peuples sibériens* (1953).[9] These are secondary sources based on ethnographic reports from different societies, and they offer a generalized picture of hunting practices and rituals. The ethnographies they use were written by outsiders, and the language and voices of native informants are virtually absent. In this respect, Smith's assertion that these sources present what the hunters "say" is somewhat misleading. Nevertheless, they do give a relatively clear picture of hunting techniques and ritual procedures.

Hallowell's survey, which was written in 1926, shows that most bear hunters employ three different methods: den hunting, hunting in the open, and trapping.[10] Den hunting is the most widely practiced method on the North American and Euroasian continents. The main hunting season takes place in the late winter or early spring when bear are hibernating in their dens. The hunters generally force the sleeping bear out of its den and kill it face-to-face, with spears, knives, axes or clubs, or shoot it with the bow and arrow or guns. Many groups also hunt bear out in the open during the warmer months of the year, and attack them with spears or clubs. Hallowell points out that this method is practiced only by the northern groups on both continents. Finally, Hallowell's sources indicate that all groups make use of snares and traps, especially the deadfall.

Descriptions of den hunting reveal a general set of procedures. First, the hunters do not say openly that they are going to hunt bear. They speak of their intentions by circumlocution and metaphor in order not to insult the animal, which they assume can hear them. When they find an occupied den, they speak formally to the bear, using respectful names such as "grandfather" or "honey eater" or "cousin," and call it out of the den. They announce they are going to kill the bear; they beg its pardon, and they ask it not to hurt them or take revenge on them at some later time. Then they use sticks or smoke to provoke the sleeping bear into emerging from the den, attacking it when it appears. Some groups prefer to kill it with a blow of an axe or club to the head as it emerges. Others wait until it has come fully out of the den and attack it with long knives, spears, or arrows, aimed at the heart or

the mid-section, or else fire gun shots to the body. These attacks may be carried out by one of the hunters or by the group as a whole. In some instances the bear is allowed to rush forward toward one of the hunters who then steps back a few paces so the bear falls onto his spear, thus impaling itself. By contrast, Siberian groups do not attack face-to-face, but prefer to block up the entrance of the den with logs, and then break into the den roof and stab or shoot the trapped animal inside.[11] The same technique is found among the Koyukon of Alaska.[12]

Many groups also hunt bear in the open during the spring, summer, and fall. Some consider this to be the bravest and most heroic method, although Hallowell points out that it is practiced only by the northern hunters. Again, the hunters avoid saying they intend to hunt bear and speak only indirectly about it. When they encounter a bear they address it in the customary fashion telling it of its death and asking pardon. A single hunter or group of hunters searches out a bear and attacks it, using only knives, spears, or war clubs in a face-to-face engagement. Although guns and steel traps have long been available, Hallowell notes that traditional weapons such as the knife, spear, and club are often deemed more ''sportsmanlike'' and a more ''manly'' way of attacking the bear. The reports indicate that the preference among some groups for single-handed combat with a bear has as much to do with personal bravado and desire for prestige as with respect for the bear itself.

In the case of trapping, a technique used by all groups, the rules of the hunt do not fully apply. Nevertheless, Hallowell cites a few reports that say that when a bear is trapped alive, it is spoken to in a conciliatory manner before or after it is killed and that it is sometimes dispatched by the blow of a club to the head or a spear thrust to the body.

Afterwards, regardless of how the bear is killed, virtually all the societies treat the slain bear in a ceremonial fashion, in what Hallowell calls ''post-mortem'' rites. Some groups greet the returning hunters and the bear with songs and put the bear's skin with head attached on display during the feast. Sometimes the post-mortem conciliatory speeches and addresses of apology are given at this time. Some groups also deny any responsibility for killing the bear, saying it was an accident or that the ''Russians'' or

"Americans" did it. The bear is always butchered in a prescribed fashion and its flesh eaten according to gender rules that prohibit women from eating all or part of the meat. Virtually all groups return parts of the bear, usually the head, to the forest, and among some groups dogs are prevented from defiling the meat or bones of the bear. Hallowell says that the general motive for these post-mortem procedures is the desire to show respect to the spirit of the bear or to the spiritual powers that control it, so that the bear will continue to "give" itself to the hunters.[13]

In addition to these rites, several societies in the Amur River-Gulf of Tartay region (the Gilyak [or Nivkhi], Ainu, Orochi, and Olcha) perform a periodic bear festival in which a bear cub is captured, kept for several months or years, and ceremonially killed. The stated purpose of this rite is to convey a request for continued provision of game to the spiritual powers via the sacrificed bear "messenger." In the view of Hallowell and others, this festival "clearly differentiates the peoples of this district from other tribes of Asia and America" who do not perform this rite.[14]

To sum up: Most bear hunters follow a general set of procedures, which seems to constitute a kind of bear-hunting etiquette. (1) The hunters avoid saying that they are going to hunt a bear in order not to insult the animal. (2) They address the bear in a conciliatory manner before or after killing it. (3) They kill it in den hunting or out in the open with thrusting weapons or guns in face-to-face encounters, sometimes in single-handed combat (although the same hunters use traps to catch bear as well). (4) Some groups also formally renounce (to the bear) any responsibility for killing it. (5) Most groups have rules about the butchering of the carcass, sharing the meat, and returning part of the bear to the forest, and all appear to have some sort of post-mortem feast. (6) Only the Gilyak, Ainu, and their immediate neighbors perform a periodic festival in which a bear cub is captured, kept for a few months, and then killed.

Having summarized Hallowell's account and the relevant parts of Lot-Falck's survey, I turn to Smith's interpretation of them. He begins with a series of questions:

> Can we believe that a group which depends on hunting for its food would kill an animal only if it is in a certain posture? Can we believe that any animal, once spotted, would stand still while the hunter

recited "dithyrambs" and ceremonial addresses? Or, according to one report, sang it love songs! Can we believe that, even if they wanted to, they could kill an animal bloodlessly and would abandon a corpse if blood was shed or the eye damaged? Can we believe that any group could or would promise that neither dogs nor women would eat the meat, and mean it? Is it humanly possible that a hunter who has killed by skill and stealth views his act solely as an unfortunate accident and will not boast about his prowess?[15]

These questions exhibit more rhetorical flourish than ethnographic accuracy. Since bear kills account for only a small percentage of the hunters' activity, the bear is not an animal on which hunting societies "depend" for food. The hunters can therefore afford to give the bear special treatment, such as attempting to kill it in face-to-face, even hand-to-hand encounters. Nowhere do the reports say that the hunters expect the bear to "stand still" when they speak to it or assume a certain "posture" before killing it, an obviously absurd idea. One report says that the hunters speak to the animal when they first see it at a distance, another says they speak only upon attacking it. Singing "love songs" to the bear was reported only in the context of den hunting, when the hunters approached an occupied den.[16] There is no mention of hunters trying to kill bear bloodlessly, although some try to minimize the show of blood on the ground in killing or butchering it. Many reports refer to prohibitions against dogs eating bear meat, and virtually all mention the existence of rules prohibiting women from eating some or all of the bear.

Despite Smith's suspicions, the literature indicates that hunters do try to follow these rules and that there are powerful sanctions behind them. Hunters who formally deny responsibility for killing a bear do so in order to deceive the bear, not to express their own "view" of the matter; hence their disclaimers are not to be taken seriously. Although traditional hunters the world over refrain from boasting about their kills, this is not always the case among bear hunters. The Algonkians, the Lapps, the Gilyak of Sakalin, for example, regard bear killing as a brave and noble sport, and some men carve a notch into a stick carried in their belts for each bear killed.[17] Nevertheless, as Smith notes, hunters typically deny that skill alone enables them to succeed. Instead, they attribute their

success to the bear's willingness to "give" itself to the hunters, a
matter to which I shall return below.

One further point must be made. Smith asserts that "most of the
groups from which this information was taken do not, in fact, hunt
bears face-to-face but make extensive use of traps, pitfalls, self-
triggering bows, and snares."[18] This is incorrect. As already men-
tioned, Hallowell's study shows that most societies practice den
hunting and open forest hunting in addition to trapping. Some
groups appear to prefer den hunting and open forest hunting, and
both may involve face-to-face engagements, even hand-to-hand
combat.

Although Smith lacks grounds for his interpretation of bear hunt-
ing, he rightly draws attention to the fact that for the hunters the
governing idea is that "the animal is not killed by the hunter's
initiative, rather the animal freely gives itself to the hunter's
weapon."[19] Bear hunting is predicated upon the idea of reciprocity:
Bears give themselves to the hunters who show respect for them.
The sources show that the bear's appointed role does no consist in
specific conduct during the hunt (for example, standing still or
assuming a certain posture when engaged by the hunters), as Smith
believes. Smith therefore misconstrues the sources in stating that
"the hunter might attempt to play his part; the animal will not
reciprocate, nor will it respond in the required manner. And the
bear's failure to reciprocate will prevent the hunter from making
his attempt if the hunt is to be successful qua hunt."[20]

In fact, the sources show that the bear's appointed role is simply
to "give" itself to the hunters. The hunters do not attempt to con-
trol its behavior in ways Smith suggests. By contrast, the hunters
make every effort to control their own behavior before, during, and
after the hunt. We may therefore conclude that the "perfect hunt,"
to use Smith's phrase, occurs every time the hunters find and kill
a bear and dispose of it properly. Success in finding and killing a
bear is, in fact, understood to be the bear's response to the hunters'
having observed the etiquette of the hunt. There is no need, there-
fore, to perform a ritualized "perfect hunt" as symbolic compensa-
tion for a perceived failure of the hunters or the bear to follow the
rules.

The same ideology obtains among the Ainu, Gilyak, Olocha,

Orochi who perform the periodic bear festival. As indicated above, the purpose of this ceremony is to kill a bear that has been held in captivity so that it will act as a spokesman to the spirits, asking them for a continued supply of game. A bear cub, conceived as a supernatural "visitor," is captured and raised with care so that it will be pleased with the human community and convey gifts to the spirit world on the people's behalf. A common theme is the parading of the bear around the village so people may show its affection and offer gifts. The officiants address the bear before killing it, asking it to think well of them and carry presents to the spirit world. Just before killing the bear, people tease it and provoke it until it is finally exhausted. It is held fast so that arrows may be shot accurately into the heart, and then it is immediately throttled to death. Officiants address the bear again during the post-mortem feast, asking it to carry gifts and requests for game to the powers that control the animals. The purpose of the ceremony is to give the bear a perfect "send off." Hence, the Ainu call this ritual *Iyomante*, "to see off" or "to send off" the bear. The Olocha of the lower Amur River call this festival "play with the bear," its purpose being to entertain the bear and send it away happily to its relatives in the forest with gifts to insure good hunting and fishing. On killing the bear, the Orochi say to it, "Go fast; go to your master; put a new fur on, and come again next year that I may look at you."[21]

II

Although Smith's interpretation of the bear festival is without foundation, his underlying theory of ritual as compensatory symbolic action is an important one and requires further consideration. For Smith, "ritual is a means of performing the way things ought to be in conscious tension to the way things are."[22] This theory poses a fundamental contrast between everyday, empirical reality ("the way things are") and ritual idealism ("the way things ought to be"), and invites the investigator to discover the gap. Although the ritualist supposedly knows the ritual image to be false, it nevertheless expresses his "ideology" and shapes how he understands the significance of what he is doing. Among hunters it is therefore the ideology of bear hunting, not the everyday reality of it, that the

hunter describes to outside investigators. Hence Smith admonishes the historian of religions not to "suspend his critical faculties, his capacity for disbelief," lest he naively confuse religious ideology with everyday reality and cover up the ritualists' knowledge of the difference.

For Smith, the motive for ritual is both "gnostic" and Freudian. It is gnostic because in performing the ritual the participants demonstrate that "we know what ought to have been done, what ought to have taken place," thereby allowing the "full significance" of everyday, imperfect reality to be perceived. Ritual enacts an ideal, make-believe reality (the "perfect hunt") in order to give greater significance to otherwise flawed experience. Ritual is also Freudian because it springs from a compulsion to make perfect order (a "controlled environment") out of the less than orderly nature of everyday life. Smith states his agreement with Freud's view of the similarity between ritual and neurotic behavior. Both, he says, "are equally 'obsessed' by the potentiality for significance in the commonplace."[23] Smith notes elsewhere that for Freud the distinguishing characteristic of ritual is "conscientiousness [toward] details." He quotes Freud:

> The ceremonial appears to be only an exaggeration of an ordinary and justifiable orderliness, but the remarkable conscientiousness with which it is carried out ... gives the ceremonial the character of a sacred rite.[24]

For Smith, then, the keys to ritual are its Freudian obsession with perfection and its "gnostic" insistence upon ideology in the face of the facts. Hence, the principal motive of the bear festival is supposedly the compulsion to get things right, to perform the perfect hunt that will make up for the lapses in actual hunting procedures, which, I have indicated, cannot be correct.

Nevertheless, an examination of Smith's theory may help to shed light on the nature of ritual, especially among bear hunters, for what Smith did not do is apply it to the more commonly performed rites that accompany all bear kills. Are these rites also to be understood as symbolic compensation for perceived failures during the hunt? Just how do these rituals compare to the hunters' words and deeds?

It is worth recognizing, first of all, that Smith intends to distinguish his understanding of ritual from other theories of ritual as symbolic action. He points out that "we should question theories which emphasize the 'fit' of ritual with some other human system."[25] "Ritual," he says elsewhere, "is not best understood as congruent with something else—a magical imitation of desired ends, a translation of emotions, a symbolic acting out of ideas, a dramatization of a text, or the like."[26] This statement clearly dismisses Malinowski's view of ritual magic as the expression of emotions as well as Eliade's understanding of ritual as the enactment of myth, a point to which I shall return. In emphasizing the misfit between ritual and ordinary reality, Smith may also intend to challenge the widely accepted anthropological theory that rituals create a fundamental congruity between a society's view of reality and its experience of everyday life.

The latter theory, at any rate, is the one I wish to examine here because of its general currency and because it differs radically from Smith's view. For the symbolic anthropologists, ritual creates and expresses forms of meaning which give significance to life because they dictate the very norms by which reality is perceived and understood. Accordingly, ritual expresses not disjunction from the world and a lack of human control over it, but conjunction and a sense of engagement, a recognized "fit" between the paradigms of religious belief and the believer's experience of the world. The task of the investigator is not to find the gap between ritual and everyday life but the bond that holds the two together.

Clifford Geertz puts it this way: "In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused together under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turns out to be the same world, producing [an] idiosyncratic transformation in one's sense of reality...."[27] The result is that "the moods and motivations induced by religious practice seem themselves supremely practical, the only sensible ones to adopt given the way things 'really' are."[28] Since this model is concerned primarily with meaning, it forces the inquirer to attend carefully to the ritualist's notion of reality and to grasp how his beliefs and actions are fitted to it.

Proposing a similar view, Mary Douglas argues that "rituals both create and control experience." Douglas refers to a ritual

among the Dinka of East Africa in which people bury alive an old
or ailing Master of the Fishing Spear, which is done at the Spear
Master's request. In this rite, Douglas points out, the Dinka do not
deny the fact of death, instead they create a religious interpretation
of it.[29] It is important to note that both Geertz and Douglas recog-
nize that ritual involves the perception of difference, the difference
between commonsense experience and the religious understanding
of it. The point of their theory is that this difference becomes
transformed through ritual and given a new meaning. Potential
incongruity is resolved by the semantic power of ritual action; the
more limited significance of everyday reality is transformed by the
wider meanings of religious language. Thus the contrived death of
the Dinka Masters of the Fishing Spear is modified by ritual and
becomes a public celebration, "a social triumph over death," as
Douglas puts it. For Geertz and Douglas, the purpose of ritual is
to transform everyday experience not by denying the facts but by
joining them to broader, more ultimate meanings.

Douglas, for her part, emphatically dismisses the Frazerian
notion that the ritualist's primary motive is to control the natural
world, "as if primitive tribes were populations of Ali Babas and
Aladdins, uttering their magic words and rubbing their magic
lamps,"[30] a notion that Smith partly shares. Indeed, it was Frazer
who proposed that genuine religion, by which he meant the formal
worship of spiritual beings, arose as a consequence of the perceived
failure of magical rites to control the empirical world, a parallel to
Smith's notion that the northern hunters created the bear festival
out of the recognition that they could not control the bear during
the actual hunt. For both Geertz and Douglas the primary aim of
ritual is not the control of the everyday world but the control of how
it is understood. Smith, too, holds that the purpose of ritual is to
control the understanding of experience, but only as a make-believe
substitute for the ritualist's admitted failure to control the real
world.

Unlike Geertz, Douglas also tackles the question of ritual's
instrumentality—the assumption that some rituals also seek to con-
trol the empirical world. First, she gives examples of the obvious
power of ritual to resolve social and psychological problems. Then
she argues that the belief in its ability to control the natural world

is less "automatic" than has been assumed. She suggests that the belief in ritual efficacy is more analogous to the belief in the miraculous than the magical. Rain-making rituals, she points out, are performed only during the rainy season, and they are not expected to produce results automatically. Even when such rituals fail, Douglas asserts that "instrumental efficacy is not the only kind of efficacy to be derived from their [rituals'] symbolic action. The other kind is achieved in the action itself, in the assertions it makes and the experience which bears its imprinting."[31] This latter statement is essentially Smith's theory of ritual (its ability to "focus" and "clarify" everyday experience), shorn of its Frazerian motive and Freudian obsession with illusion.

In elaborating a theory of sacrifice, Valerio Valeri formulates a better integration than Douglas of the symbolic and instrumental aspects of ritual.[32] He argues that ritual sacrifice may be understood as efficacious in ways similar to J.L. Austin's analysis of illocutionary and perlocutionary utterances. A ritual, Valeri suggests, is effective in a symbolic or illocutionary sense when it communicates to the performer a particular understanding of the world such that he comprehends both the world and himself as an agent in it in the manner formulated in the ritual. A ritual is effective in an instrumental or perlocutionary sense when its performance is deemed to bring about certain objective results. These results are not viewed as occurring automatically but "performatively" as the result of certain ritual conditions, rather like a verbal command that succeeds in causing someone to do something. Valeri's point is that any theory of ritual must have a way of interpreting both the symbolic function of ritual, the results of which are purely conventional and affect the performers' understanding of the world, and the instrumental function of ritual, the results of which are nonconventional and are understood by the performer to affect the world itself. Here again we see that investigator's concern is with questions of meaning not empirical validity. Like Geertz and Douglas, Valeri takes the task of understanding ritual to be primarily a semantic and semiotic one, analogous to understanding a language as a system of meanings.

Finally, it is well to keep in mind Victor Turner's emphasis upon the fact that while ritual paradigms do indeed shape how religious

believers view the world, these paradigms are neither simple nor totally rigid but complex and open to change:

> Ritual, in all its performative flow, is not only many-leveled, "laminated," but also capable, under conditions of societal change, of creative modification on all or many of its levels. Since it is tacitly held to communicate the deepest values of the group regularly performing it, it has a "*paradigmatic*" function, in both of the senses argued for by Clifford Geertz. As a "*model for*" ritual can anticipate, even generate change; as a "*model of*," it may inscribe order in the minds, hearts, and wills of participants.[33]

The difference between this anthropological view and Smith's theory is clear, as is their common epistemological foundation. Behind each is the assumption that religion is an interpretive framework that gives meaning to an objective, common world.[34] Smith proposes that ritual provides an idealistic interpretation of the world to which the believer knowingly (or, perhaps, unknowingly) clings; the anthropological view proposes that ritual provides a rich and "deep" interpretation of the world that the believer accepts as true and acts upon.

As theories, of course, neither can be accepted as a description of how the world is but merely as a framework for focusing and interpreting the evidence. The pertinent issue is not a question of truth or falsity but of intellectual power, whether the anthropological model is unacceptably superficial and naive (because less insightful, less theoretically promising, and less in tune with the facts) compared to Smith's more critical, Freudian view.

III

The answer is that neither model can be evaluated apart from specific contexts of analysis. Thus I want to return to the subject of bear rituals and to Nelson's excellent account of them among the Koyukon.[35]

The Koyukon relationship to animals is based upon their stories of the Distant Time. These stories explain how the world began, how the animals became their present selves, and how the Koyukon people should behave toward them. For the Koyukon the Distant

Time is the mythical age at the beginning of time, when human beings and animals were the same. After the Distant Time period ended, people and animals became completely separate, although the Koyukon believe that animals still possess certain "human" qualities. Most animals are understood to have distinct personalities, to communicate with each other, and to understand human behavior and language. Koyukon therefore think that animals are aware of what people say and do, and they believe that animal spirits are easily offended by disrespectful behavior. A variety of prohibitions (*hutlaani*) surrounds all animals. These taboos constitute an elaborate moral code. They govern how people speak about animals, how men hunt and care for their weapons, how hunters butcher animals, how they share the meat, and how they dispose of the bones and skins.

Although Koyukon sometimes hunt bears out in the open, the main hunting season begins in the middle of October when the bears have entered their dens. The Koyukon country is rich in bears, and den-killed bears are the fattest and best-tasting of all. The black bear is especially prized for its delicious meat and for the social prestige enjoyed by the hunters who kill it. When planning to hunt bear, men refrain from speaking directly about it, knowing that the bear will hear them and disappear. Hunters avoid using the literal term for the black bear (*sis*) and use the circumlocution "black place." This is the name that women must always use. Even in the course of everday conversation, people choose their words carefully and speak cryptically when referring to den hunting.

Koyukon recognize the physical similarity between bear and human beings, although for them this does no imply kinship. A bear standing up at a distance, peering across an open field, shading its eyes with a raised forepaw, looks remarkably human, as does a skinned bear carcass lying in the grass. This special resemblance between bear and humans may be the reason why it alone is given a funeral-like potlatch feast, or "bear party," soon after it is killed. Apart from the bear party, the most valuable parts of the bear are saved for the community potlatch memorials for the dead.

Koyukon men are skillful and dedicated bear hunters. In the fall they travel widely through the land, searching for occupied bear

dens. These are ground-level openings formed by uprooted trees that bears make into their lairs, or openings in riverbanks or knolls dug out by the bears themselves. The hunters check known dens and look for new ones, and they examine the snow for signs of bear. The Koyukon usually consider each den a property "owned" by the man who discovered it.

Although the hunters know that great skill and years of experience are necessary for successful hunting, they say that "luck" is essential. Koyukon use the English term "luck" to denote a special, nearly tangible quality or essence that people possess. It is sustained or diminished by conduct toward animals and by adherance to the taboos described in the Distant Time stories. People lose their luck when they offend an animal and are punished by its spirit; they keep their luck when they obey the taboos and earn the favor of the animal spirits. Older men can pass on their luck to younger hunters in showing them how to hunt. Luck is also a contagious quality that inheres in a hunter's equipment and clothing. Some men have more luck than others with bear, either because they have shown respect for bear all their lives or the bear favor them. A hunter can lose his luck if he passes on his equipment to others, and his weapons can be made unusable if prohibitions against contact with women are not observed.

Since there is an avoidance relation between women and bear, hunters must limit their relations with women during the fall bear season. They must refrain from talking with women about bear hunting, they must keep their rifles from female contact, and they must not talk of women while hunting. There are stories about hunters who broke these rules and failed to kill any bear. There are also stories about bear attacks and severe illnesses that came as the result of breaking the rules and insulting the black bear.

One of the episodes in the television series *Make Prayers to the Raven*, which Nelson wrote and co-produced, is titled "Life in the Bear."[36] It shows Tony Sam, his brother Wilson, a nephew, and a friend hunting bear in dens. When Tony Sam finds a den and determines that it is occupied, he calls to the other hunters, who have dispersed into the forest, to join him. Instead of killing the bear by himself he wants to give the others a chance to share in his success, for this is more important than succeeding by itself. The

hunters clear the entrance of the den, removing the moss and grass that the bear used to block the opening. Tony Sam explains that before he shoots a bear he talks to it. ''I always talk with the bear when they are in there [the den]. If I know he's in there, then I talk with the bear. But it's hard to explain; I ain't going to explain that. [It is] so he doesn't get rough with you. That's the reason I do that. My old man taught me to [do it].'' Hunters also talk to bear when hunting in the open. Preparing to shoot a bear in the distance a man might say, ''I am your friend—be easy with me—go slow— put up your head.''[37] The video recording shows a bear peering out of the entrance of the opened den before Tony Sam shoots it at close range. At another den we see two of the hunters aiming their rifles at the entrance while another hunter pulls out moss from the entrance. We do not see the actual shooting of the bear. Afterwards, Tony Sam explains that he had to hold his flashlight next to the barrel of his rifle in order to see into the den as he shot the bear.

The hunters tie a rope around the bear's neck or leg and pull it out. The rope must be a ''clean'' one that has not been around dogs or anything that might offend the bear's spirit. Before butchering the carcass Wilson Sam carefully slits the bear's eyeballs. He does this so that the bear's spirit will not see if he violates one of the many rules of proper treatment. The first thing the men do after skinning the carcass is to cut up the intestines and roast them for the women and children at home. (It is ''like candy'' says Tony Sam.) After the meat is cut up and packed in the sled, the head and the skin are left at the site of the kill. These parts are potent and the consequences of violating them are strong, especially for women. Although women may eat certain parts of the bear, contact with other parts would offend the animal and cause other bears to avoid the hunter who killed it. A few days after the black bear has been killed, Tony Sam and his friend hold a ''bear party.'' The feast is a modest affair, a dozen or so men and boys, gathered outdoors near the woods, cutting up and cooking bear meat (the neck and backbone parts) which have been put aside for this purpose. The men say that women are not allowd to eat the head or the neck parts of the bear (''The women would get mean from it''), so they gather outdoors at a clean forested place away from the village and

women to hold their party. The men say that it is good to get together in this way. They build a fire, saw up the neck bones, roast and boil the meat, talk with each other, and enjoy the feast.

Several of the men speak about what they are doing. They say that the bear party helps them "keep their luck," so that they will continue to catch more bear. "From my perspective, you know, it's hard to get bear," says one of the hunters. "There's a lot of luck involved. So this is kind of a way of [the hunters] getting their luck, you know. They keep their luck going all the time, whoever get bear." The way to keep this luck is to have a bear party and to share the bear meat among the hunters, other men and boys, even babies. Another hunter says, "It keeps up the good luck for the people that's catching bear. My father, he taught us how. We're a big family, and we hunt all over. And he taught us how to do it. Some of us can catch it, and some of us can't, you know." One hunter says that the bear party "is a really important part of our culture. It's a concept of sharing that's in our culture. I think it's good that the old people keep emphasizing that."

At the bear party they tell stories about bear hunting, and they tell tales from the Distant Time when all the animals were human beings. Tony Sam tells a story about the Bear and the Lynx. "The Lynx asked the Bear, 'How long would you last if you turned away from people?' The Bear says, 'Oh, maybe four years or five years, maybe then I'll come back to the person again and try him out again.' The Lynx says, 'Not me. If I turn away, I stay away. I'll never go back to a person again.'" The story explains why the hunters hold the bear party. It is a way of showing respect to the bear after it is killed. If this is not done, the bear will "turn away" and the hunters will not be able to find or kill any more for a long time. Speaking about his success, Tony Sam explains:

> I always take care of my animal. I'm happy with it, and it always comes back to me. Every fall, summer, winter, you know. If I look for it, it comes. It takes time, sometimes. A lot of work. You got to do a lot of work on it to do any good. Some of us go out one or two days and don't catch anything. We get disgusted. But not me. I don't do that. I just keep right on going till I see something or somebody catches something with me. That's the way my old man taught me. When I hunt bear, you know, we'll get to it [kill a bear]. He'll let

us find him. If we don't find him, we don't find him, you see. If
we've got good luck with it, then we'll find him.

On the surface, the bear party does not seem to be a ritualistic
occasion. The men speak about it pragmatically as a way of insur-
ing successful hunting and of renewing traditional culture. But, as
Nelson was told, the bear party is implicitly a funerary potlatch for
the bear spirit.[38] A Koyukon potlatch is a ceremony that honors the
deceased with food and gifts for relatives and friends. The soul of
the deceased sees that many people have come to the potlatch in his
or her name and that the food and gifts have made people happy.
Satisfied and content, the soul will then depart and not bother his
or her kinsmen. In the bear party the hunters honor the bear as one
of the most powerful animal spirits; and, according to one of
Nelson's informants, in eating the special parts of the bear reserved
for the bear party they "eat the main part of the bear's *life.*"[39]

By performing a funeral potlatch, the hunters make the bear an
honorary member of the human community, recalling the relation
that obtained in the Distant Time. The bear party epitomizes the
moral and spiritual relationship between human beings and the
animal kingdom. The Koyukon believe that they can live only by
the generosity of the animals which they earn by treating them with
respect, as if they were human beings. The bear party expresses the
moral message of the hunt: "We pay respect to you so that you will
continue to give yourself to us that we may live." So it is with all
the other animals. The bear party therefore performs the way
things are understood from the Koyukon perspective, and it is a
means of maintaining this understanding.

This view of the bear party can be made clearer if we contrast
it with the interpretation Smith's theory suggests. Following Smith,
we might say that the bear party springs from a perceived gap
between the Koyukon experience of bear hunting and the
"ideology" expressed in the ritual. For the Koyukon, we might
say, bear hunting is recognized (implicitly or explicitly) as an
exploitive and destructive action undertaken for purposes of acquir-
ing meat and social prestige. They therefore see a contradiction
between their ideology which says that bears "give" themselves to
the hunters and their deliberate actions in finding and killing them.
Realizing this, the hunters perform the bear party to express their

view of "the way things ought to be" in contrast to "the way things are," so that they may justify their actions and "perfect" the otherwise cold-blooded and brutal experience of the hunt.

This interpretation, it may be noted, is similar to that proposed by Lot-Falck in her study of Siberian hunters. "Although driven by necessity," she says, "the hunter is not convinced of the legitimacy of his act; his feeling of guilt is clearly evident in the care that he takes to justify himself, to disengage his responsibility, to reconcile himself with his victim."[40] That is, the hunters' rituals are merely elaborate ways of denying feelings of guilt about killing animals, and their purpose is simply to legitimate the killing.

The Norwegian scholar Carl-Martin Edsman expresses a similar view in writing about the bear-runes in the Finnish *Kalevala*. He suggests that the participants in the bear feast are "burdened with guilt." Hence they console the bear in song while carrying the steaming pot of bear soup from the kitchen hut to the cabin: "Lo! the cook has died in the kitchen," they sing, "and his boy in the porch has fallen."[41] However, the joyfulness of the hunters, as depicted in a seventeenth-century drawing of a Finnish bear feast reproduced in Edsman's essay,[42] hardly conveys feelings of guilt. Understood in this context, the purpose of the songs seems to be aimed at fooling the bear into believing that the hunters are sorry to have killed it so that the bear will not take offense. In the *Kalevala* hunters protest their innocence and try to reconcile themselves with the bear they have killed: "Let us take the paws in handclasp/... I it was not that o'erthrew you./... You yourself slipped from the brushwood,/you yourself from the fork tumbled down."[43] The purpose of these songs is not to express guilt but to placate the bear so that it will give itself to the hunters again.

Smith, too, thinks that hunters need to legitimate their actions and rationalize their ideology in the face of contradictory experience. "Is it humanly plausible," Smith asks, "that a hunter who has killed by skill and stealth view his act solely as an unfortunate accident?"[44] Here Smith requires the investigator to inject his or her own sense of plausibility into the interpretive process, which of course must be done. But context and evidence are all important, no matter whether one is in the "armchair" or the field. Smith asks the investigator to decide nothing less than whether the

bear hunters believe their own words. In the above example from the *Kalevala*, it seems clear that their words are not to be taken literally and the hunters know it.

Let us return to the Koyukon. We must agree with the symbolic anthropologists, I think, and assume that language determines how people understand and explain their experience. Does the hunter simply find and selfishly kill a hibernating bear or does he believe his success is a matter of the bear "giving" itself to him? It depends on the language he uses. Is the hunter's view of his success explainable in terms of his skill or in terms of Koyukon notions of "luck" and "respect" for animals? Again, it depends on the language the hunter uses. Even the deceitful use of language is linguistically determined, as good ethnography will show. For example, Nelson tells about a man who killed a starving bear and her cubs, after realizing that they had been driven from their den by ground water and were wandering hopelessly in the deep snow. When the hunter finished cutting up the bear carcasses, as a gesture of utilization and respect, he told his companion, "We'll come back for this later," a placating promise that he did not intend to keep.[45] The issue here is one of empirical fact: What do the hunters actually say and do? Is there evidence that they are somehow implicitly or explicitly hypocritical in performing the bear party?

If we were to apply Smith's theory to the bear party, we would have to say that the Koyukon hunters implicitly (if not explicitly) recognize that hunting is a cold-blooded act accomplished entirely by the hunters' stealth and skill. Since this contradicts their "ideology" of reciprocity between bears and men, the hunters must be said to perform the bear party in order to "focus" themselves upon this ideology despite their recognition that things are otherwise. The ritual may therefore be said to portray bear hunting as it "ought to be," a mutually respectful, moral, and reciprocal relationship, instead of the way the hunters actually know it "is," a unilateral, exploitive, and destructive one.

If this interpretation is to be evaluated (and not merely imposed upon the ethnography), there must be evidence for it; and it seems clear that there is none. There are, indeed, important references to Koyukon hunters who do not share the traditional view, although these individuals are not dealt with in Nelson's book or the televi-

sion series. Their absence is of course understandable, as they presumably no longer employ the special language and taboos of the bear hunt or accept the meaning of the bear party. For them to attend the party would obviously be hypocritical.

Nevertheless, one might still insist that Smith's theory represents the fundamental truth of the situation. But it is not cogent philosophically to try to assert such a God's-eye point of view, a sort of "transcultural rationality,"[46] nor would such an assertion address the question at issue. The issue here is one of intelligibility concerning the Koyukon understanding of the bear party, not the intrinsic nature of reality, against which to measure Koyukon ritual. The outsider's perspective of reality may of course contradict the Koyukon view, and it is the privilege of the outsider to insist upon his own criteria of plausibility and credibility. The problem lies in confusing the two, in giving priority to the outsider's view of reality, "the way things are," and in assuming that the natives must share this view so that their rituals become merely forced "ideological" statements about the way "things ought to be." No wonder Smith understands ritual to be a self-concious rationalization of attempts to control a world that the natives believe they cannot compel. From this perspective we would have to say that the Koyukon view of bear hunting is an illusion, that they know it, and that they hold the bear party because of an obsessive need to believe it anyway. This, it appears, comes very close to saying that the Koyukon hunter lives in a Freudian cuckoo-land.

The way out of this problem is through careful representation of the Koyukon view of the world. This may differ from the outsider's view, and if so, the Koyukon can truly be said to live in a different world. For the Koyukon, this is a world that is ultimately defined by religious ideas and practices, by the Distant Time stories, and by ceremonies such as the bear party. "Religion," Geertz points out, "alters, often radically, the whole landscape presented to common sense, alters it in such a way that the moods and motivations induced by religious practice seem themselves supremely practical, the only sensible ones to adopt given the way things 'really' are."[47] Hence, the skeptic's and believer's ideas of what is plausible and credible may radically differ on some points, although of course not

on all.[48] The only problem with Geertz's model is that it presupposes that in the ritual context the believer "leaps" or "slips" (to use Geertz's metaphors) from a common-sense perspective to a religious one and back again when the ritual is finished, whereas for the believer there is in fact no perspectival jumping or sliding around, as is clear from the way the Koyukon hunters talk about the bear party.

For the Koyukon hunters, it seems, the world "is" the way it "ought to be," and ritual helps to keep the two fused together. Koyukon say they "talk" to the bear, show it "respect," and hold a "bear party" so that the bear will continue to "give" itself to them. There is therefore a profound correspondence between Koyukon words and deeds, between what they say and do in the bear party and what they say and do while hunting.

Despite this fundamental fusion between religious imagery and perceived reality, there appears to be no basis for interpreting the bear party as an Eliadian enactment of a myth.[49] Some northern hunters, to be sure, tell stories about a bear that was killed and received ceremonial attention from human beings in the primordial time, and this myth does seem to serve as an archetype for the post-mortem rites among these groups.[50] But no such myth has been recorded among the Koyukon. Nor is it possible to understand the bear party as a ritual return to a mythical time in the way Eliade's theory might suggest. For the Koyukon, the original identity that existed between animals and human beings was forever destroyed by the great flood. Thereafter, human beings and animals became entirely separate and different. Nevertheless, Eliade's theory, more broadly interpreted, does draw attention to the way in which ritual expresses mythic themes. The bear party is based upon the notion of a moral relationship between humans and animals which existed from the very beginning. This notion is central to the Distant Time stories, and the bear party both expresses this mythic idea and helps to maintain the hunters' belief in it.

In addition to being a symbolic expression that honors the bear, the bear party is also, for the hunters, an instrumental act. It is a means of controlling the bears' behavior and keeping the hunters' "luck." Given the premise of reciprocity, the hunters intend the bear party to have nonconventional results, that is, they expect it

will oblige the bear to give itself to them again. In this way it helps them keep their ''luck'' so they can kill more bears, a point that the hunters emphasize in explaining the purpose of the ceremony.

Luck, as indicated above, is a quality that can be increased or decreased by a hunter's behavior, and the bear party is one of the ways of ''keeping'' it. The principle here is the sympathetic one of ''like produces like,'' of treating the bear like a human being by holding a funerary potlatch so that it will respond by giving itself to the hunters again. The bear party is therefore a kind of hunting magic or perlocutionary utterance performed with the intent of sustaining the hunters' success, although of course the results are not automatic or guaranteed. Tony Sam admits that he often fails to find bear, and he attributes his relative success to both his persistance and his luck.

For Tony Sam, then, there is a fundamental congruence between the ritual of the bear party and his experience of the world. Contrary to Smith's view that hunting rituals testify to the hunter's belief that he is ''not in control,'' the bear party expresses the hunter's conviction that he can actually influence his environment. Continued success confirms his view of the efficacy of the bear party and strengthens his attachment to it. Efficacious ritual is not, as Smith rightly notes, to be regarded as an ''offensive against the objective world,''[51] just as a perlocutionary utterance is not an offensive against the socio-linguistic world. Rather, such performances are expressions of the hunter's claim that he is a recognized player in the wider universe, a universe in which his actions, both ritual and nonritual, have effect. Indeed, performing the bear party is one of the ways the Koyukon keep their experience of bear hunting consistent with their understanding of their moral relationship to the bear. It not only expresses and validates this relationship, it deepens the hunters' commitment to it.

This, I think, is the way we should understand some of the ''bare facts'' of Koyukon bear rituals.

Department of Religious Studies   BENJAMIN C. RAY
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903, USA

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[1] "The Bare Facts of Ritual," *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 53-65. This is a revised version of "The Bare Facts of Ritual," *History of Religions* 20 (1980): 112-27.

[2] Ibid., p. 62.

[3] Ibid., p. 63.

[4] Ibid., p. 64.

[5] Ibid., p. 65.

[6] Ibid., p. 64.

[7] Ibid., p. 63.

[8] Richard K. Nelson, *Make Prayers to the Raven* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[9] A.I. Hallowell, "Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere," *American Anthropologist* 28 (1926): 1-175; Eveline Lot-Falck, *Les rites de chasse sur les peuples sibériens* (Paris: Gallimard, 1953).

[10] For simplicity, I have retained the use of the ethnographic present tense, even though in many societies most of these hunting procedures and ceremonial customs are now obsolete.

[11] Waldemar Jochelson, *The Koryak*. Edited by Franz Boas. Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 6. The Jesup North Pacific Expedition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1905-1908), p. 555.

[12] Richard K. Nelson, *Hunters of the Northern Forest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 120.

[13] Hallowell, pp. 144-45.

[14] Ibid., p. 121.

[15] "Bare Facts," pp. 60-61.

[16] Hallowell, "Bear Ceremonialism," p. 54.

[17] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[18] "Bare Facts," p. 61.

[19] Ibid., p. 59.

[20] Ibid., p. 64.

[21] John Batchelor, *The Ainu and Their Folk-Lore* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1901), Ch. 42; Joseph M. Kitagawa, "Ainu Bear Festival (Iyomante)," *History of Religions* 1, no. 1 (1961), pp. 95-151; Alexander M. Zolotarev, "The Bear Festival of the Olcha," *American Anthropologist* 39 (1937), pp. 113-130, 123.

[22] "Bare Facts," p. 63.

[23] Ibid., p. 56.

[24] Jonathan Z. Smith, *To take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 111.

[25] "Bare Facts," p. 57.

[26] *To Take Place*, p. 109.

[27] Clifford Geertz, "Religion As a Cultural System," in: *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1973), p. 112.

[28] Ibid., p. 122.

[29] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 66.

[30] Ibid., p. 58.

[31] Ibid., p. 68.

[32] Valerio Valeri, *Kingship and Sacrifice*. Translated from the French by Paula Wissing (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), especially pp. 62-74, 343. See also Benjamin C. Ray, " 'Performative Utterances' in African Rituals," *History of Religions* 13, no. 1 (1973): 16-35.

[33] Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), p. 82.

[34] On this important topic, see Terry F. Godlove Jr., *Religion, Interpretation and Diversity of Belief*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Godlove's devastating criticism of the Durkheimian notion of religion as a conceptual scheme does not, however, apply to the ritual theories of Geertz, Douglas, or Valeri.

[35] *Make Prayers to the Raven*, see especially pages 16-32, 172-84, 225-237; *Make Prayers to the Raven*, Parts 1-5. Produced by KUAC-TV. Richard K. Nelson, writer & associate producer. (Fairbanks: University of Alaska-Fairbanks, 1987).

[36] *Make Prayers to the Raven*, KUAC-TV. Part 5: "Life in the Bear."

[37] Nelson, *Make Prayers to the Raven*, p. 179.

[38] Ibid., p. 181. For further information on the Koyukon funerary potlatch, see *Make Prayers to the Raven*. KUAC-TV. Part 2.

[39] *Make Prayers to the Raven*, p. 182.

[40] *Les Rites de chasse*, p. 9.

[41] Edsman, "The Hunter, the Game, and the Unseen Powers: Lappish and Finish Bear Rites," in: Harald Hvarfner, ed., *Hunting and Fishing* (Lulea, Sweden: Cliches Buchtrops, 1965), p. 185. See also, Carl-Martin Edsman, "Bears," in: Mircea Eliade, Editor-in-Chief, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Vol. 2 (New York: MacMillan, 1987), pp. 86-89.

[42] Edsman, "The Hunter," p. 186.

[43] Ibid., p. 183.

[44] "The Bare Facts," p. 61.

[45] *Make Prayers to the Raven*, p. 24.

[46] I borrow this expression from Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*. Vol. I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 26.

[47] "Religion As a Cultural System," p. 122.

[48] On this point, see Godlove, *Religion, Interpretation and Diversity of Belief*, Ch. 4.

[49] "Any ritual whatever ... unfolds not only in consecrated space ... but also in a 'sacred time,' 'once upon a time' (*in illo tempore, ab origine*), that is, when the ritual was performed for the first time by a god, an ancestor, or a hero" (Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History*. Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask. New York: Harper & Row, 1959).

[50] For myths of this kind, see E.A. Alekseenko, "The Cult of Bear among the Ket (Yenisei Ostyaks)" in: *Popular Beliefs and Folklore Traditional in Siberia*. Edited by V. Dioszegi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), pp. 178-81; Kitagawa, "Ainu Bear Festival," pp. 139-40; Edsman, "The Hunter, the Game, and the Unseen Powers," pp. 171-75.

[51] "The Bare Facts," p. 65.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP
MAGIC—RELIGION

H.S. Versnel

Summary

The well-known substantialist—'Frazerian'—definitions of magic as distinct from religion by its immediate and individual goals, the concomitant manipulative and coercive attitude, the instrumental and mechanical type of action etc., have been under attack for more than half a century. Anthropologists in particular have argued that no meaningful contrast between religion and magic can be gained from this approach and that our notion 'magic' is a modern-western biased construct which does not fit representations of other cultures. Consequently, in the view of some of them, the term 'magic' should be altogether avoided. Furthermore, with respect to the ancient and early modern world, in which the opposition religion-magic is supposed to have originated, it is argued that magic and religion function *exclusively* as value-judgments, terms indicating 'magic' being exploited to stigmatize illegitimate or undesired (religious) behaviour of socially or culturally deviant groups.

In the present article it is argued that—although admittedly this functionalist approach has yielded remarkable and lasting results—rejection of the term 'magic' will soon turn out to be unworkable and, in fact, is putting the cart before the horse. From an etic point of view—which in the view of the author is the only possible way to conduct scholarly discourse—it will be impossible to do cultural research without the aid of heuristic instruments such as—at least broad, polythetic or prototypical—definitions. And, if possible at all, it would be utterly unpractical to completely eliminate religion as one of the obvious models of contrast.

This position is substantiated with some practical instances from the Graeco-Roman world. It is shown that, at least in the context of (magical) curse-tablets and—related but clearly distinct—(religious) prayers for justice or vengeance, the ancient authors were clearly aware of the very same distinctions modern people normally associate with the notions of magic and religion.

Definitions and their critics

Magic does not exist, nor does religion. What do exist are our definitions of these concepts.[1] Scholars in earlier decades of this century were luckier: they knew both what magic was and how to find it. They simply opposed its characteristics to those of either science or religion, which they knew as well. It all began with Frazer's tripartite distinction between science, religion and magic,

the first being defined as knowledge which is actually or potentially verifiable by research, the second and third belonging to the category of dogmatic knowledge, the truth of which is asserted without regard to empirical verification. In his view, the basic difference between the latter two was that religion is intrinsically and essentially unverifiable, whereas magic is not, but will, if put to an empirical test, prove false. Magic, as "bastard science" or "pretended art", and science proper alike claim to offer operational knowledge which can be exploited to attain control over the environment and to achieve concrete goals directly, without mediation. Magic and religion have in common that they refer to supernatural forces and powers, a reality different from normal reality. It will be evident that there is a tension between the notion of non-mediation (that is: without needing a *personal* medium other than the magician or his client—of course not without instrumental aid) and that of the supernatural agent, a tension which was bound to surface in subsequent discussions.

In the framework of these Frazerian definitions of religion and magic—I will be silent on science, which is outside the scope of my issue[2]—a set of distinctions has been elaborated which have dominated the discussion years after their formalization in the much-quoted catalogue of 11 oppositions by the anthropologist Goode.[3] Though the serious criticism that had already been expressed in the thirties has been repeated and elaborated with ever increasing emphasis in recent decades, the following distinctions— a selection of the most important items—are still generally applied, at any rate outside the field of anthropology.

1) *Intention.* Magic is employed to achieve concrete, mostly individual goals. Religion is not primarily purpose-motivated, or at most focusses on intangible long-term goals which concern collective issues of society.[4]

2) *Attitude.* Magic is essentially manipulative. Man is both the initiator and the executor of processes he controls with the aid of knowledge which he has, or which is put, at his disposal. Religion views man as dependent upon powers outside his sphere of influence. This entails an attitude of submission and supplication. The opposition is thus one between "instrumental, coercive manipulation" and "personal, supplicative negotiation."

3) *Action*. Magic is characterized by the attention paid to the technical side of the manipulation, precision of formula and *modus operandi*. Professional experience is often required since the knowledge is secret. But if all the instructions are observed, there is an expectation of direct results. In so far as religion, on the other hand, admits of intended effects (prayer for health, votives, private oracles), the results are never dependent upon a professional specialist, though his skill may be required as a mediating factor, nor on the suppliant, but solely and exclusively on the free favour of sovereign gods.

4) *Social/moral evaluation*. Since the goals of magic often run counter to the interests of other members of the society, magic easily acquires the connotation of an anti-social or at least a-social activity, thus leading to the Durkheimian dichotomy: magic is immoral, anti-social, deviant, whereas religion has positive social functions, is cohesive and solidarizing.

One might, of course, elaborate upon distinctions but these suffice for our purpose. In order to illustrate their influence I note that all, except the last, are implied in the definition given by no less an anthropologist than Sir Edmund Leach in 1964: ''The term magic denotes a complex of belief and action on the basis and by means of which persons and groups may attempt to control their environment in such a way as to achieve their ends, the efficacy of such control being untested and in some cases untestable by the methods of empirical science. The core of the magical act is that it rests on empirically untested belief and that it is an effort at control. The first aspect distinguishes it from science, the second from religion.''[5]

Practically no item in this scheme has escaped criticism. It has been demonstrated that typically ''mechanical'' (*ex opere operato*) magical devices lie at the heart of religious (*ex opere operantis*) ceremonies, most revealingly in the grand debate between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the 16th century.[6] As far as antiquity is concerned, the typical rites of primitive Roman religion have induced its characterization as a ''magical religion''. *Vice versa*, some expressions of the magical papyri of late antiquity sometimes cannot be distinguished from religious confession. It has also

been shown that magic can have social goals (for instance collective spells and devices for a good harvest or against catastrophes) and religion a-social effects (hermits, sectarianism, destructive forms of crisis-cults). Again, that people do not always display more belief in the "automatic" effects of spell or amulet—not showing any surprise or even disappointment when they do not yield the intended result—than they have in prayer. And it has been argued that there *is* no essential or generally valid distinction between spell and prayer, since they sometimes exploit similar formulae in similar circumstances.[7]

Once we have arrived at this point it is only a step to the final conclusion, defended by some scholars, and first by R.R. Marett, that any distinction between religion and magic is an illusion based on a variety of fallacies, especially ethnocentric projection and historical distortion.[8] The modern concept of magic, so these critics reason, is the product of an evolution which started in late antiquity in the context of Jewish-Christian conflict with remnants of pagan cult and which acquired its definitive Western connotations under the double influence of a comparable theological conflict between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the 16th century and the subsequent evolution of Western scientific ideas. Magic and its above-listed symptoms are an essentially modern-Western, rationalistic and biased concept and as such quite unsuitable for application to the study of non-Western cultures where similar dichotomies cannot always be demonstrated, either terminologically or conceptually. Such criticism, moreover, derived considerable support from the discovery that in addition to all other similarities between magic and religion, they also could excercise identical functions on the level of social psychology e.g. as conductors of socially unmanageable emotions or frustrations.

Consequently, since Marett many anthropologists have expressed serious doubts as to the utility or relevance of the distinction and some have even advised that the terms 'magic' and 'religion' should be avoided altogether.[9] It is noteworthy, however, that some of them, among whom the most influential, accepted this surrender only because, and as long as, the existing definitions did not work out or were being disputed. Cl. Kluckhohn (o.c. n. 9), for

example, does feel that the terms 'religion' and 'magic' may be meaningfully contrasted at the common-sense level, just as the terms "boy, youth, man, old man, which neither physiologists nor psychologists will wholly discard but which they will also not attempt to include among the elementary units and basic concepts upon which they rear their sciences."

The result is a confusing spectrum of divergent theories between the extremes of a Tylorian dichotomy between theistic religion and magic seen as mutually exlusive and incompatible concepts[10] and the view that magic—if distinguishable at all from religion—is merely an aspect of it. In that case magic is not to be contrasted with religion itself but to be compared with or opposed to other components of religion, for instance prayer or sacrifice.[11] Significantly, between those who, enthusiastically or reluctantly, continue to adhere to some kind of a definitional distinction either between magic and religion, or between magic and other aspects of religion, some striking correspondences can be noted:

1) there is a marked tendency to single out manipulative-coercive versus emotional-supplicatory attitudes as the essential distinction between magic and (other components of) religion,[12]

2) the contrast is, since Ruth Benedict, generally viewed in terms of theoretical extremes functioning as conceptual tools to analyse a reality that, of course, will seldom or never answer to these ideal-typical "abstractions". Reality, instead, generally displays a "continuum" between the two extremes,[13]

3) *all* the theoreticians start from their own concept of magic, whether in order to defend or refute its correctness, relevance, applicability, general validity, ethnocentricity, (dis)similarity with religion etc. etc. without, however, always making explicit their own definition. Practically no one escapes moments of reduced concentration when they suddenly fall into using unsophisticated common sense concepts, though they sometimes betray their awareness of the lapse by putting the term magic between inverted commas or adding "so-called". One problem is that you cannot talk about magic without using the term magic. Using a term entails having a concept, even if to reject its applicability. Another problem is that magic is not always magic.

A field-test: the Graeco-Roman world

Let us illustrate the latter statements with a few examples from the discussion on magic in antiquity. In antiquity the term *magos/magus* had a double meaning: Persian priest (originally belonging to the tribe of the Magi) and enchanter, wizard, with predominantly negative overtones: charlatan, imposter.[14] The former and original one is responsible for the fact that the negative connotations associated with the latter could not exercise an unrestrained tyranny. Partly because of the strange, exotic and shady rituals of the Persian fire-cult the term came to usurp connotations of existing Greek terms for sorcery etc. such as *goès*, sorcerer, magician, which nourished negative connotations as well.[15] In the early imperial period, however, the negative aspects of *magus, magicus, magia* and other terms belonging to the complex of magic and sorcery underwent significant changes. In the official language the whole ''magic complex'' was associated or identified with—and just as eagerly persecuted as—indecent, un-Roman and suspected religious currents, for which the usual terms were *superstitio, prava religio, vel sim.* Quite often, for instance, we cannot distinguish whether Chaldei were persecuted on the charge of sorcery, or because they advocated religious convictions which were, for whatever reason, not appreciated by the Roman officials. In fact, the two could obviously be regarded as identical whenever this was useful either socially of politically, as has been demonstrated by P. Brown in his innovative, albeit somewhat overdrawn treatment of the accusations against sorcerers in late antiquity.[16]

Combining the sociological theories of Durkheim and Mauss with Merton's theories on social deviance, scholars like J.Z. Smith[17] have, for this period of antiquity, adopted a strictly social definition of magic, not marked by a specific type of attitude or action or object, but exclusively as an instrument of social disqualification. A process of reclassification had made magic an assemblage of deviant and illegitimate beliefs and related practices. Magic was now—in some sectors of society—defined as ''practices which were impious, heretic, demonic or fraudulent'' and ''whether or not a particular idea or attitude was said to be magical depended mainly on who said it, and the persuasiveness of the label depended mainly on the weight of authority behind it''. These are

both quite apposite quotations from the observations of Hildred Geertz on Tudor and Stuart England where a similar redefinition took place. In the words of Phillips: "The category 'magic', then, has utility for the study of Roman religion, but only in the context of the person employing it".[18]

This sociological approach has been and proves still to be extremely fruitful for our interpretation of certain patterns of conduct in Roman times. It allows us to understand why "magical" practices such as for instance miraculous healings could be either lauded as testimonies of the power of the god in whose name they were performed, or meet with suspicion, persecution and condemnation if regarded as manifestations of *prava religio*, inspired by demonic powers.[19] Consequently, one of the problems of miracle workers was to convince the world that they were not *magi* but took their inspiration from "legitimate" sources.[20] Apollonius of Tyana, the famous miracle worker of the first century A.D., found it necessary to explain that he could understand the language of birds or predict earth-quakes, *not* because he was a *magus* but simply because he lived on a diet that made his body hyper-sensitive to vibrations of the air. Jesus had to defend himself against the imputation that his power to do miracles derived from demonic forces. Pagans in the first three centuries A.D. accused Christians of magical practices (next to incest, canibalism and atheism) and got it all repaid in the fourth and fifth century, when they were confronted with the very same accusations.[21] In sum, accusations of magic could function as a social and political weapon to diabolize and eliminate the opponent.

Yet this social function of magic by no means precludes the existence of more concrete 'substantive' implications of the term. As I shall argue *infra*, apart from an aspect of social illegitimacy there were also more formal characteristics associated with magical practice. If one really wishes literary support for this truism there is the accusation against Apuleius to prove it.[22] This is granted for instance by a faithful follower of J.Z. Smith in one of the best short accounts of this issue: D.E. Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity" (o.c. n. 16). In keeping with the functionalistic approach, he writes: "Magic is defined as that form of religious deviance whereby individual or social goals are sought by means alternate to those

normally sanctioned by the dominant religious institution''. And
he regards magic as a species of the genus religion: ''Magic appears
to be as universal a feature of religion as deviant behaviour is of
human societies''. In the meantime we observe that the expression
''seeking individual or social goals'' and the term ''means'' une-
quivocally refer to 'old-fashioned' definitions of magic that most
more dogmatic disciples of the social interpretation would eat their
tongues to avoid. He even rubs it in: ''goals sought within the con-
text of religious deviance are magical when attained through the
management of supernatural powers in such a way that results are
virtually guaranteed''.[23]

Cutting knots

So we are again confronted with an embarrassing mixture of
essentialist definitions and functional alternatives. And this in fact
seems to be unavoidable. Both—and perhaps other approaches as
well—will have to co-operate if we do not wish simply to abolish all
communication on concepts of magic and religion. In order to
create at least some sort of common platform on which scholars can
stage their ideas in such a way that others may understand, if not
appreciate, their ideas on central issues, I very succintly and provi-
sionally formulate a few reflections.

1) Scholars who deny or minimize the relevance of distinctions
between magic and religion (or the relevance of the mere concept
of 'magic') usually refer to non-Western cultures where similar
distinctions do not seem to operate as clearly as they are supposed
to do according to modern Western theories. In so doing they
follow the ''emic'' (''inside'', ''first person'', ''empathic'')
approach many modern anthropologists more or less dogmatically
adhere to.[24] However, Malinowski's ''testament'' *A Diary in the
Strict Sense of the Term* (1967) has done much to shake the foundations
of this belief. ''The myth of the field-worker, perfectly self-tuned to
his exotic surroundings, a walking miracle of empathy, tact,
patience, and cosmopolitanism, was demolished by the man who
had perhaps done most to create it.''[25] Independently, however,
many an anthropologist or sociologist had already ventilated doubts
as to the possibility (if not the desirability) of such an ''empathic''

approach. Goode reproaches his opponents for failing to under-stand what a concept is *for*: "If the natives do not 'see' a distinction we believe scientifically important, we do not discard it on that account", since "we are engaged in precisely that task, to create scientific theory and concepts with which to understand all social processes". Less doctrinaire but no less clear, Evans-Pritchard says that "terms are only labels which help us sort out facts of the same kind from facts which are different or in some respects different. If the labels do not prove helpful we can discard them. The facts will be the same without their labels". Finally, a sociologist who has become a professor of Ancient History, K. Hopkins writes: "Yet as moderns and as historians we have no alternative but to use our own concepts and categories to describe and explain other societies."[26] After this random list of quotations it will come as no surprise that I would subscribe to Snoek's categorical statement: "It should be clear then, that an emic scholarly approach is a *con-tradictio in terminis*. Scholarly discourse is always etic and should therefore be conducted in etic terms".[27]

Consequently, it may be more rewarding to inquire whether non-Western cultures do or do not recognize a distinction between categories *we* introduce and, if they do not, ask why not (*and* why we do), than discard *apriori* our own conceptual tools, a psychologi-cal *tour de force* which many scholars believe to be an illusion in the first place.

2) But what if the categories are not only inapplicable to non-Western cultures but also very dubious as categories in themselves since the various items appear to blur and are certainly not all or not always equally distinctive? Then there are two options. One is categorically to avoid both the use of the term magic and any query which entails the application of this term even in books which have magic as their very subject. This means consistent use of more restricted terms as "amulets, defixio, prayer, sacrifice, malevolent practices", etc. (after as precise definitions as possible), without classifying them into a manageable taxonomy, whereas the use of terms like "spell, sorcery" already becomes dangerously risky. All this will, of course, soon appear to be utterly unpractical. The only realistic alternative is to devise at least a working definition of the concept you are going to employ. This definition might belong to

the type of classifications without sharp borders, more especially the so-called polythetic classes, as they were for the first time formulated by Wittgenstein.[28] He uses the example of the concept 'game', which he describes as a family to which all games belong, without, however, sharing all the family resemblances. They are linked by "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing". This insight has been applied to the use of the concept of religion—where, of course, similar definitional problems loom up. W.P. Alston,[29] for instance lists what he calls nine "religion-making characteristics" and he states that "When enough of these characteristics are present to a sufficient degree, we have religion". He also says that "the best way to explain the concept of religion is to elaborate in detail the relevant features of an ideally clear case of religion and then indicate the respects in which less clear cases can differ from this, without hoping to find any sharp line dividing religion from nonreligion" (*ibid.*).[30]

Just like religions, 'magical' practices or expressions may share some though not all family resemblances. This means that we may accept a 'broad, polythetic or prototypical' definition of magic, bases on a "common sense" collection of features, which may or may not, according to convention and experience, largely correspond to the items listed in the first part of this introduction: instrumental, manipulative, mechanical, non-personal, coercive, with short-term, concrete and often individual goals etc., and employ this as a provisional ideal-typical standard, coined by *our* cultural universe, and just see what happens. As Kluckhohn has well observed,[31] "No definition can hope to incorporate (...) all aspects of each conception established in the various fields of learning and yet remain serviceable. (...) Construction of a definition must depend upon convenience (....) [which] demands doing as little violence as possible to whatever established core of meaning may exist in familiar usage in ordinary language and scholar terminology. It also requires simplicity so far as this is consistent with precision".

3) Any definition, given its provisional and experimental status, needs continuous readjustment. It may for instance prove preferable to substitute (or clarify) the "coercive" element by the very attractive category of "performative" action introduced by

Tambiah.[32] Certain elements included in earlier definitions have been ousted, definitively it seems, such as the axiomatic supposition of the setting of magic in lower layers of society, or the presumed lesser degree of emotion involved. Others may follow. The definition should remain open, never be taken absolutely nor exclude *apriori* the insertion of other characteristics. Though purpose-oriented classifications may turn out to be of little value in one sort of rites, this should not necessarily lead to a general denunciation. Nor is the relevance of a classification according to the nature of a ritual action and the concomitant attitudes *per se* affected by the discovery of social or socio-psychological functions such as the canalization of aggression or anxiety or the control of social tension. Rather are there serious reasons to doubt the suitability of functional elements—however important as tools for understanding social processes—as instruments for a general classificatory system. This may appear from the fact that practically no scholar using the functionalistic approach manages to elaborate his social interpretation of magic without using the term 'magic' in one or the other of the more conventional substantive meanings, as we have seen in the examples above.

4) The question whether distinctions should be drawn between magic *and* religion or magic and other features *within* religion is then, besides being a matter of personal viewpoint and, indeed, of belief, of minor importance. What is important is to make a distinction between magic and non-magic, and it will be impossible—and, *if* possible, utterly impractical—to completely eliminate religion as one obvious model of contrast, if only for the fact that both religion and magic basically refer to 'supernatural' powers.[33] The question whether one of these contrasts is religion or the propitiatory and supplicative aspects within religion is of secondary importance. In order to prevent misunderstanding, one should make one's standpoint explicit and, before doing so realize that one's choice does have considerable consequences. When A.D. Nock, o.c. (n. 14) 312, notes on ancient Greece "there is not, then, *as with us* (my italics H.S.V.), a sphere of magic in contrast to the sphere of religion" one may accept or dispute this pronouncement, but should at least realize that it could only be made because of the supposition implied in the italicized part.

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Ancient Greece was a non-Western culture. Ancient Greece was the first Western culture. Both statements can be defended. There is no reason whatsoever dogmatically to deny the applicability of modern notions of magic to particular sections of Greek ritual action. Moreover, those who contend that the modern idea of magic was originally coined by a Jewish-Christian setting in late-antiquity are themselves guilty of a serious reduction, since they forget that this type of ''associative engineering'' was anticipated by a comparable reclassification of the notion of magic by Roman officials against Christians (as related above) and, what is more, that similar manipulations, though less systematically applied, were as old as Greek democracy: it was so usual to identify (undesirable) prophets of a new religion with magicians and charlatans that Euripides could play with it in the *Bacchae* calling the prophet of the Dionysiac religion a *goès*, and a disreputable priestess Ninos was convicted in the fourth century BC for having introduced new rites *and* having practised magic.[34] Indeed, Greece had it all: the use of spells, magical curses, incantations and all sorts of material means, fabricated according to the recipes of professional specialists, in order to attain direct and immediate goals, with or without the enforced assistance of supernatural beings. Not only did Greek *have* it, it was also *aware* of it, reflected on it, frequently expressed disapproval of it, linked it with exotic creeds, and‧used it as an effective weapon in the competition with rivals in love, commerce, lawsuits or sports.

Greece also had something which no modern scholar would hesitate to call religion. We thus perceive distinctions that resemble those drawn in the first part of this paper. And we can also see the blurrings of these distinctions, sometimes incidentally at other times systematically, even consciously. Conscious blurring of distinctions, for instance, is one of the most characteristic and interesting phenomena in the Greek magical papyri of late antiquity. Again one has a choice between several options. One may totally ignore the phenomenon, because one denies on principle any distinction between magic and religion. But then one should quit speaking of ''magical papyri'' (and religious elements in them) in the first place. Or one can use the phenomena of late antiquity

in order to support a more general theory that these categories were blurred throughout antiquity. However, one can also maintain the "ideal" extremes and observe that the "path from magic to religion could be seen as continuous in the papyri" as A.E. Segal o.c. (n. 16) phrases it. Personally, I would prefer the later option. If one starts from the idea that magic *is* religion, one loses the chance of saying that "magic *was* religion", as Segal concludes for this specific genre and period, and of explaining *why* such blurring was more radical and pervasive in this cultural context than at other times and places in the Ancient World. In my view this would be a serious draw-back.

And if we now, just for a moment, equipped with some random family resemblances of magic (*versus* religion) investigate the Greek and Roman evidence, do we indeed find what practically all recent investigators claim to find: namely that our division did not have the same relevance in antiquity, indeed, that it did not exist at all? Let us follow one of them, H. Remus in a solid and useful recent article: "Magic or Miracle? Some Second Century Instances".[35] The author inquires on what grounds the negative labels *magos*, *magikos* etc. were applied. He analyses all those aspects that we commonly associate with the label magic as we have listed them above: manipulations, charms, gestures, application of secret texts, compulsory action through the use of secret names of gods or demons etc. etc. And of course he finds that using a powerful name may be labelled magic in one case and religion in the other depending on the position of the god concerned in the value system of the dominant group. The same is true for objects: an amulet of a pagan god will be listed among magic, whereas the use of a crucifix for miracle cures may be accepted as a deed of religious fervour. Indeed: "your magic is my miracle, and vice-versa".[36] All the same the author has to concede "that there is some agreement that magic involves compulsion" and he produces quite a number of unequivocal statements in which the supplicatory attitude of prayer is radically opposed to the compulsory one of magical spells. Nonetheless it is also true that "the canons were not tight and the texts we have examined suggest that judgments were not made by impartial testing but on other grounds, to the detriment of 'their' rites and

wonders and the advantage of 'ours' ''. So he concludes, as we
expect by now: ''In these examples it is evident that manipulations
as such do not really demarcate miracle from magic, except for per-
sons determined beforehand to make that demarcation. Such deter-
mination roots in social and cultural settings, which are more
important in understanding such conflicts than are the manipula-
tions which are found both in magic and in miracle''.

Now, I do not for one moment dispute the correctness of his
analysis. However, it should be realized that ''your magic is my
miracle'' is no less true for modern-Western perception, where
according to recent views the substantivistic distinction between
magic and religion came to existence.[37] A bottle of a magical
medicine sold by a mysterious foreigner at the fair is often opposed
to the bottle from Lourdes, which is religiously sanctioned, though
both are chemically the same and are used for the very same pur-
poses. However, my point is that this social differentiation in asses-
ment, true and important as it may be, as such by no means entails
the necessity to reject the concept magic for use in comparative
research. Such inferences could be considered only if charges of
magic, ancient and modern, were *consistently devoid of any concrete
details or argumentation*. However, these charges were generally but-
tressed with references to all sorts of suspicious practices, ques-
tionable gods and demons, secrecy and so on.

Apparently, the ancients no less than modern people knew *what
specific* imputations would come in handy to underpin their charges.
The questions of whether these charges had any basis in real prac-
tice and whether the materials might also function on the *right* side
of the borderline between religion and magic, though interesting
from a different perspective, are of no direct importance for the
issue under discussion. What concerns me now is the perception of
the deviant forms of religion or outside religion *and* the practices
they were consistently associated with. And it is this ancient *represen-
tation* of the magical attitude which often closely corresponds with
what we call magic. As we noticed earlier Apollonius of Tyana
found it necessary to explain that he could understand the language
of birds or predict earth-quakes, *not* because he was a *magus* but
simply because he lived on a diet that made his body hyper-
sensitive to vibrations of the air. Also, the authors or revisors of the

New Testament have done wonders to eliminate anything that might recall sorcery in Jesus' behaviour, the use of saliva for the healing of a deaf and dumb person apparently being an isolated slip of the pen.[38] Now, if Jesus or his biographers systematically avoided references to manipulations which might arouse suspicion of magic, they must have known *what* to avoid. In the life of Theodorus it is told that the blessing of this holy man, and no longer an amulet prepared by a wise woman, was what was now supposed to protect you from the effects of a green lizard that had fallen into your soup.[39] Of course, this is also an instance of "your magic is my miracle". But to exclude other approaches of interpretation would be seriously reductionist. For exactly the same distinction is made by the Hippocratic author of *Sacred Disease* (15th c. BC) who opposes the use of *katharmoi* and *epoidai* (purificatory medicines and spells), which he denounces because they are used to compel the gods, to *thuein, euchesthai* and *hiketeuein tous theous* (sacrifice, pray and supplicate the gods), which he approves of as examples of a pious attitude.[40] All this means that apart from the aspect of social judgment there were also more formal characteristics generally associated with magic action.[41]

To conclude. I was enticed into treading this slippery path by a research project in the field of ancient religion, *in casu* an analysis of the complete corpus of the so-called *defixiones* from Graeco-Roman antiquity.[42] These mostly short curse-texts, usually inscribed in lead tablets, are intended to harm or bind a person whom the author, mostly for reasons of envy or competition, does not like. Starting from basic formulas such as: "I bind or fix or nail down John, that he may not move, breathe, speak" etc., the following common characteristics can be found: a god or demon from the Netherworld is invoked, who is ordered to execute the wish of the author of the tablet. Practically without exception the author is anonymous, and there is no legitimation of the harmful act. Often the tablet is transfixed with a needle. Also a kind of voodoo-doll may be added.

During my research I found a number of texts that had always been included in the corpora of *defixiones*, but which nevertheless betrayed a different atmosphere and phrasing. Here we read for

instance: "John has stolen my coat (or: I suspect John of the theft). If I am right, oh mighty Lord, I implore you: come to my aid, punish him, that he may suffer (or in other texts: that he may return my property). Please hear my prayer, O Lord, for I, Peter, have been wronged". There are clear and rather consistent differences with the common type of *defixio*: the author makes himself known, he has every right to his action for he has been injured and therefore there is generally an argument or legitimation for the action; instead of pressure there is supplication, instead of demons or gods of the Netherworld we see great gods of the heavens, Zeus, the Sun, Theos Hupsistos.

I have baptized the latter, clearly deviant types of *defixiones* 'judicial prayers' or 'prayers for justice'. Of course, there are also mixtures of both types, but my point is that the differences between the ideal type of the *defixio* proper and that of the judicial prayer appear to correspond strikingly with the distinctions that former generations used to associate with the opposition between magic and religion. So, for the time being I shall continue to label my *defixiones* magical acts (in which I follow the common practice even adopted by those who reject the conventional definitions of magic) and my judicial prayers religious acts, and I feel supported by the fact that here at least the ancient authors display an unequivocal and explicit awareness of the differences. And I believe it may be useful to investigate whether we detect these distinctions based on practical characteristics in other sectors too. We can never do so without the heuristic tools provided by our 'broad' definitions. Whether this will turn out to be as useful for other cultures as it is for the Greek and Roman world I do not know. Perhaps the Greeks were prototypically modern-Western biased rationalists *avant la lettre*? But if we begin by rejecting terms, concepts and definitions right from the outset, *nobody* will ever know.

Herenweg 88   H.S. Versnel
NL-2361 EV Warmond

[2] *Inter alia* for the reason that the existence of notions of religion and magic in antiquity is hardly debatable, while a concept of science is patently absent. See Phillips o.c. (below n. 16) 2700 ff. Modern discussion on the relationship magic-science: K.E. Rosengren, "Malinowski's Magic: The Riddle of the Empty Cell", *Current Anthropology* 17 (1976) 667-685 and some of the comments. Note that since J. Goody, "Religion and Ritual: The Definitional Problems", *British Journal of Sociology* 12 (1961) 142-157, many scholars tend to view the dichotomy profane-sacred (or: supernatural) as a Western ethnocentric construct.

[3] W.J. Goode, "Magic and Religion. A Continuum", *Ethnos* 14 (1949) 172-182; *idem, Religion among the Primitives* (Glencoe 1951).

[4] This, in fact, is a summary of Malinowski's famous theory as presented in: "Fishing in the Trobriand Islands", *Man* 53 (1918) 87-92, and elaborated in: *Magic, Science and Religion* (1925) and the article "Culture" in: *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* 4 (1931) 634-42.

[5] In: J. Gould and W.L. Kolb, *Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (Glencoe 1964) s.v. magic. Cf. *ibidem* "Magic is the use of 'dogmatic knowledge' for control, religion the worship or propitiation of beings known dogmatically." More extensively R. Benedict had said much the same in her sensible article "Magic" in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* X (1933) 39 ff. It should be noticed that Leach recanted in later works.

[6] See: K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Harmondsworth 1973 = 1971). The exchange with Hildred Geertz, in: "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975-6) 71-108, well illustrates the confusions which result from the adoption of diametrically opposite—substantive/essentialist *versus* functional—definitions.

[7] See especially J. van Baal, "Magic as a Religious Phenomenon", *Higher Education and Research in the Netherlands* 7 (1963) 10-21; W.E.A. van Beek, "The Religion of Everyday Life: An Ethnoscience Investigation into the Concepts of Religion and Magic", in: W.E.A. van Beek and J.H. Scherer, *Explorations in the Anthropology of Religion. Essays in Honour of J. van Baal* (The Hague 1975) 55-69. H. Philosooph, "Primitive Magic and Mana", *Man* 6 (1971) 182-203, argues that magical action is often employed in order to influence autonomous (divine) powers.

[8] I refer for a survey of this discussion and the bibliography to M. and R. Wax, "The Notion of Magic", *Current Anthropology* 4 (1963) 495-518; more pointedly: Dorothy Hammond, "Magic: A Problem in Semantics", *American Anthropologist* 72 (1970) 1349-1356. Cf. Rosengren o.c. above n. 2, and the comments by referees. H.G. Kippenberg and B. Luchesi (edd.), *Magie, Die sozialwissenschaftliche Kontroverse über das Verstehen fremden Denkens* (Frankfurt 1978) provides a useful collection and a good introduction by Kippenberg.

[9] A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (Glencoe 1952) 138: "…. to avoid as far as possible the use of the terms in question until there is some general agreement about them." C. Kluckhohn, in: A.L. Kroeber *et alii* (edd.), *Anthropology Today* (Chicago 1953) 518: "Anyone can make a definition that will separate magic from religion; but no one has yet found a definition that all other students accept"; D.F. Pocock, "Foreword" to Marcel Mauss [transl. R. Brain] *A General Theory of Magic* (London 1972) 2: "If categorical distinctions of the Western mind are found upon examination to impose distinctions upon (and so falsify) the intellectual universes of other cultures then they must be discarded or, as I have put it, dissolved. I believe 'magic' to be one such theory …"

[10] R. Horton, "A Definition of Religion and its Uses", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 90 (1960) 201-220: religion entails a belief in spiritual beings, magic is a "secular" phenomenon; M. Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation", in: *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, A.S.A. Monographs 3 (1966) 85-126: magic like politics or art is a functional alternative to religion. Cf. also E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford 1965) 33. Most of this in the context of a revival of Tylor's 'substantivistic' approach of religion. See: R. Horton, "Neo-Tylorianism: Sound Sense or Sinister Prejudice?", *Man* 3 (1968) 625-634; E. Ross, "Neo-Tylorianism: A Reassessment", *Man* 6 (1971) 105-116.

[11] This is the conclusion of D. Hammond o.c. (above n.8) 1355, "Magic would serve as a denotation for one type of ritual behavior (viz. "mechanical religious practices") and thus belong to the set of terms in that category, such as prayer or sacrifice. With these propitiatory rites it is contrastive, not with religion", somewhat along the lines drawn by E. Norbeck, *Religion in Primitive Society* (New York 1961). Quite close to this: J. van Baal (o.c. above n. 7), who defines magic as: "all those acts and spells directed towards furthering a certain aim by employing another reality than the empirically determinable one, in which process this other reality is not independently active but is an instrument manipulated by the active person", and who sets magic within the category religion.

[12] For instance: R. Benedict, o.c. (above n. 5); R.H. Lowie, *History of Ethnological Theory* (New York 1937) 103; *idem, Primitive Religion* (New York 1948) 141; E. Norbeck, *Religion in Primitive Society* (New York 1961) and many others. See the survey by D. Hammond o.c. (above n. 8) and her conclusions (p. 1350): "These two characteristics—impersonal forces and manipulative techniques—remain as current critical diagnostic features." Note that the same characterization of magic is accepted by D. Hammond herself and J. van Baal (preceding note), who both denied the dichotomy magic—religion.

[13] So *in nuce* already R.R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (London 1914) 28, but much more cogently formulated by R. Benedict o.c. (above n. 5) 40; *eadem*, "Religion", in: F. Boas (ed.) *General Anthropology* (Boston 1938) 647; the term "continuum" was made popular by Goode o.c. above n. 3.

[14] See on the development of the terms: A.D. Nock, "Paul and the Magus", in: *idem, Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* I (Oxford 1972) 308-330; G. Delling, in: *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* IV, 360-363.

[15] See: W. Burkert, "*Goès*", *RM* 102 (1962) 36-55.

[16] P. Brown, "Sorcery. Demons and the Rise of Christianity: from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages", in: *idem, Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London 1972) 119-146. On these processes also: R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order* (Cambridge, Mass. 1975²) 95-127. Important reflections in: D.E. Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity", *ANRW* II. 23.2 (1980) 1507-1557: A.F. Segal, "Hellenistic Magic: Some Questions of Definition", in: R. van den Broek and M.J. Vermaseren (edd.), *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions for G. Quispel* (Leiden 1981) 349-375, with honest criticism of some of P. Brown's theories. Most recently and most important: C.R. Phillips III, "The Sociology of Religious Knowledge in the Roman Empire to A.D. 284", *ANRW* II, 16.3 (1986), 2677-2773, espec. 2711-2732. Cf. also below nn. 19 and 20.

[17] J.Z. Smith, "Good News is no News", in: *idem, Map is not Territory. Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden 1978) 190-207.

[18] H. Geertz, o.c. (above n. 6) 75; Phillips o.c. (above n. 16) 2718. Cf. *ibid.*

2579: "Terms such as 'magic' or 'orthodoxy' (...) represent conceptual models of the group which employs them: they do not possess absolute, eternal authority", and: "the appearance of a term like 'magic' represents a value-judgment of the author employing it, whether the author be Apuleius, Origen, Sir James Frazer or Arthur Darby Nock".

[19] Most recently on the strategies applied in sorting out approved from disapproved practices and in attributing them to 'true religion' and 'magic' respectively: J. Neusner, E.S. Frerichs, and P.V. Flesher (edd.), *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and Conflict* (Oxford 1989), who rightly contend that by studying these processes we gain insight into the groups' self-definition. The principle had been recognized long ago; L. Bieler, *Theios Aner* (Darmstadt 1967 = Wien I-II, 1935-6) 84-87, who already refers to G.P. von Wetter, *'Der Sohn Gottes'. Eine Untersuchung über den Charakter und die Tendenzen des Johannes-Evangeliums* (Göttingen 1916) 73-82; R. Herzog, *Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros (Philologus Suppl.* 22/3, 1931) 140; "Aberglaube ist immer der Glaube der Anderen"; cf. also: G. Theissen, *Urchristliche Wundergeschichten* (Gütersloh 1974), 230: " 'Aberglaube' ist dann der in einer Gesellschaft abgelehnte Glaube, 'Glaube', so könnte man ironisch formulieren, der offiziell anerkannte Aberglaube. Wo die Grenze zu ziehen ist, bestimmen die massgeblichen Kreise" (as quoted by Remus 1983, o.c. [next note] 207 n. 2).

[20] Anitra B. Kolenkow, "A Problem of Power: How Miracle Doers counter Charges of Magic in the Hellenistic World", *Society of Biblical Literature. Seminar Papers* (Missoula 1976) 105-110. Cf. Segal o.c. (above n. 16) 356 f.; Phillips o.c. (above n. 16) 2716 n. 112; H. Remus, " 'Magic or Miracle'? Some Second Century Instances", *The Second Century. A Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1982) 127-56, reissued as ch. IV of his book: *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century* (Cambridge Mass. 1983).

[21] See the article "Heidenverfolgung", in *RAC*; Phillips o.c. (above n. 16) 2713 n. 104; R. Turcan, "Les motivations de l'intolérance chrétienne et la fin du mithriacisme au IVe siècle ap. J.-C.", *Actes VI Congr. FIEC* II, 209-226.

[22] See the discussion by A. Abt, *Die Apologie des Apuleius von Madaura und die antike Zauberei* (Giessen 1908). Cf. also: N. Fick, "La magie dans les *Metamorphoses* d'Apulée", *REL* 63 (1985) 132-147.

[23] With the observation: "those who failed to achieve the particular benefits promised by religion not infrequently turned to magic for an alternate means and one generally regarded as socially deviant for achieving their goals", he differentiates between the substantive and the functional characteristics, but adopts both as relevant.

[24] For fundamental discussion see: P. Winch, *Die Idee der Sozialwissenschaft und ihr Verhältnis zur Philosophie* (Frankfurt 1974); A. MacIntyre. "A Mistake about Causality in Social Sciences", in: *Philosophy, Politics and Society* 2nd ser. (edited by P. Laslett and W. Runciman, Oxford 1967) 48-70; I.C. Jarvie, *The Revolution in Anthropology* (London 1967[2]); J. Agassi and I.C. Jarvie, "Magic and Rationality", *British Journal of Sociology* 24 (1933) 236-45, some of which are collected in German translation in: Kippenberg and Luchesi o.c. (above n. 8).

[25] Cl. Geertz, " 'From the Native's Point of View'. On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding", in: K.H. Basso and H.A. Selby, *Meaning in Anthropology* (Albuquerque 1976) 221-237, esp. 222. See on the concepts of "emic" and "etic" the good discussion by M. Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (New York 1968) 568-604.

[26] Goode in his reaction to the article of the Waxes, *Current Anthropology* 4 (1963) 507; E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford 1937) 11; K. Hopkins, "Contraception in the Roman Empire", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 8 (1965) 124-157. "Wie können denn fremde Glaubensanschauungen beschrieben werden, ohne daß der Beobachter seine eigenen Begriffe mit heranzieht?" (Kippenberg o.c. above n. 8, p. 43, and see his discussion).

[27] J.A.M. Snoek, *Initiations. A Methodological Approach to the Application of Classification and Definition Theory in the Study of Rituals* (Diss. Leiden 1987) 7.

[28] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York 1958, translated from the German ed. 1953) I, 66-7.

[29] "Religion", *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol 7 (1967) 142. The principle of polythetic classification is exemplarily exploited by J.Z. Smith, "Fences and Neighbors: Some Contours of Early Judaism", in: *idem, Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jones Town* (Chicago 1982) 1-18. Its import for anthropological studies has also been questioned, for instance by R. Needham, "Polythetic Classification: Convergence and Consequences", *Man* 10 (1975) 349-369.

[30] This is a prefiguration of what recently has been labelled the "prototype theory" of classification, as was shown by B. Saler in a paper read during the Congress of the *IAHR* at Rome, september 1990. I am indebted to this paper for some information on problems of the definition of religion.

[31] C. Kluckhohn, "Values and Value-Orientations in the Theory of Action. An Exploration in Definition and Classification", in: T. Parsons and E.A. Shils (eds.) *Toward a General Theory of Action* (Cambridge Mass. 1959) 394/5. I am painfully aware of the injustice I have done to the infinitely intricate problems of the definition of definitions, as one can learn from J.A.M. Snoek, o.c. (above n. 27), who, on p. 9 f., largely advocates the strategies as formulated in my text.

[32] S.J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words", *Man* 3 (1968) 175-208; *idem*, "Form and Meaning of Magical Acts. A Point of View", in: R. Horton and R. Finnegan (edd.), *Modes of Thought* (London 1973) 199-229. For a variant see: J. Skorupski, *Symbol and Theory. A Philosophical Study of Theories of Religion in Social Anthropology* (Cambridge-New York 1976). Cf. also E.M. Ahern, "The Problem of Efficacy: Strong and Weak Illocutionary Acts", *Man* (1979) 1-17. This approach was made productive i.a. by Rosengren, o.c. (above n. 2), and cf. J. Winkler and Chr. Faraone in: Chr. Faraone and D. Obbink (edd.), *Magika Hiera. Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford 1990). However, as Richard Gordon warned me, D.S. Gardner, "Performativity in Ritual. The Mianmin Case", *Man* 15 (1983) 346-60, argues that the crucial features of initiation rituals, and therefore others concerned with magical or religious conceptions, cannot be understood (exclusively) as 'illocutionary' acts: "The similarities are superficial and derive from the putatively automatic effects of the rituals".

[33] Cf. Rosengren o.c. (above n. 2) 678: "It makes better sense to start with a distinction between ordinary reality (or realities) and extraordinary reality (or realities)".

[34] I have collected and discussed the evidence on identifications of magic and foreign cults in my *Ter Unus. Isis, Dionysos, Hermes: Three Studies in Henotheism* (*Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion* I. [Leiden 1990]) 102-123, and the case of the *Bacchae* pp. 156-205.

[35] o.c. (above n. 20).

[36] According to the often quoted expression by R.M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (New York 1966) 93.

[37] Consequently, a remark such as "The definitional boundaries of the term (magic) in the ancient world for a long time remained remarkable fluid" (Phillips o.c. [above n. 16] 2718), runs the risk of losing sight of similar vaguenesses in modern applications of the term.

[38] Jesus is often interpreted as essentially a Hellenistic type of magician, most emphatically by M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge Mass. 1933) 220-237; and *Jesus the Magician* (New York 1978). Once again magic is not always magic, depending as it does upon the authority of the person who is using the term: F. Preisigke, *Die Gotteskraft der frühchristlichen Zeit* (Leipzig 1922) saw in the healing of a woman by the touching of Jesus' clothing a pure example of magic, but W.L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids 1974), 192, says: "By an act of sovereign will God determined to honour the woman's faith *in spite of the fact* (my italics H.S.V.) that it was tinged with ideas that bordered on magic." In a similar apologetic vein: H.C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times* (Cambridge 1986). The two sides of the medal in: E.V. Gallagher, *Divine Man or Magician? Celsus and Origin on Jesus* (Chicago 1982). See on these issues especially: Aune o.c. (above n. 16); Phillips o.c. (above n. 16) 2757 ff..

[39] *V. Theod.* cc. 124 and 143, as quoted by P.R.L. Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley-London 1982) 151.

[40] *Sacred Disease* 2, 12-13 and 4, 36 ff. Remus o.c. 145, tries to downplay them by taking them as expressions of "adherents of one culture pitted against those of another, with antithetical premises and values". But the opposition between 'magical' spells or charms, and pious supplicatory prayer is by no means restricted to this text. And even so, the Hippocratic author, just like the author of the *Vita Theodori*, knew what to censure.

[41] A phrase by Segal o.c. (above n. 16) 367, may help to clarify what I mean: "Thus the charge of 'magic' helps distinguish between various groups of people from the perspective of the speaker but does not necessarily imply any essential difference in the actions of the participants. In a narrative about the event, the narrator will attempt to clarify his grounds for distinction". This passage (rightly) indicates two valid questions in the approach of magic: the functionalist one (who speaks about whom, to whom, in what ways, and why?) and the substantivist (exactly *what* is being said, in terms of adducing concrete evidence ?).

[42] The results have been published in "Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers", in: Chr. Faraone and D. Obbink (edd.), *Magika Hiera. Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford 1991), 60-106.

PRIMITIVE RELIGION IN DUTCH RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Lammert Leertouwer

Summary

   In the twentieth century, Dutch religious studies have been decisively influenced by two external factors: the vicissitudes of the Netherlands as a major colonial power and the gradually declining impact of theology upon the intellectual discourse.
   In this paper, the notion "primitive religion", representing an apposite test-case, is examined, as it is used by four influential scholars in the field: C.P. Tiele, G. Van der Leeuw, Th.P. Van Baaren and F. Sierksma.

   The history of the study of religion in the Netherlands has to a great extent been determined by the fact that this country was a colonial power till the middle of this century.[1]
   This is a feature that leaps to the eye immediately when the boundaries of this discipline—which in fact consists of a range of disciplines—are extended as far as possible. The work of scholars such as Kern and Snouck Hurgronje, is inconceivable without this colonial context. Ethnographers such as Kruyt and Adriani similarly worked in a colonialist climate in their capacity as Christian missionaries.[2] In fact occasionally,[3] they were directly commissioned by the colonial government. For all of them found their main fields of inquiry in the religions and cultures of the then Dutch East Indies. They also derived their notions about the phenomenon religion directly from the complacent self-confidence originating in the European civilization from which they issued.

Comparatists, historians and theologians in Dutch religious studies

   This contribution focusses upon comparative religion as a field of study. Such a narrow perspective is bound to result in some historical misrepresentation, if only because all students of this discipline were by definition forced to borrow largely from the work of historians and linguists. In many instances they incorporated concepts of the phenomenon religion into their work as such. Some-

times they failed to employ sound critical working methods. Under such conditions some of their results were bound to be questionable.[4]

On the other hand, however, the limitation opted for in this paper is also advantageous; perhaps decisively so. Starting from the fact that from 1876 onward comparative religion has in the Netherlands been pursued especially in the Faculties of Divinity, and that its great masters were—with the exception of W.Br. Kristensen—theologians, I shall try to demonstrate that the theological context of the research in comparative religion has had a decisive impact on the various notions which were employed in the research, and that this context has alternately obscured and accentuated its colonial aspect.

The theological context of the (comparative) study of religion is even now gaining weight after more than a century of officially recognized studies of religion. In addition the Netherlands witnesses an increasing interest in the question concerning its contribution to Dutch culture and to what extent it was and perhaps still is not only a consumer but also a producer of "civil religion". Holland, indeed, is appositely nicknamed "theologians country"[5]; the birth of the Dutch science of religion is closely linked up with a crisis in the nineteenth-century Christian theology.[6] Its vicissitudes ever since have been interwoven with the decreasing influence of theologians on the public discussion in this country.[7]

The topic "primitive religion"

In the second place, we will confine ourselves here to notions about "primitive religion". In the light of the theological context opted for, this likewise could result in a misrepresentation: the students of comparative religion were more often than not specialists in one or more of the religions of western classical antiquity and it may therefore safely be assumed that it was this fact which decisively influenced their interpretation of "religion" rather than the data they gleaned from their contact with religions of a-scriptural peoples.

Against this plausible assumption two objections can be raised in advance. The historical material immediately proves that the

theological comparatists, whatever their initial special field of study, were influenced by the hypothesis of cultural evolutionism which discerned the core and the historical beginning of all religion in the religions of non-literate or "a-scriptural" peoples. C.P. Tiele unreservedly espoused this hypothesis, and, to the utter amazement of all those who up till then had mainly known him as an orientalist, he chose this hypothesis as the subject of his Leiden inaugural lecture in 1873 when assuming the post of professor at the Remonstrant Seminary.[8] G. Van der Leeuw, while rejecting the evolutionary model—mainly on grounds relating to his theological views rather than to the study of religion—nevertheless betrays in numerous passages that he cannot get round the evolutionist model in that he views primitive religion as the structural pole of all religion, though not as its oldest phase.[9] Th.P. Van Baaren, remaining a historian of religion all along, rejected the hypothesis radically, while F. Sierksma replaced it by a projection doctrine based upon developmental psychology and the philosophical anthropology of Helmuth Plessner.[10]

It seems to me that what is decisive here is not so much the rejection or acceptance of the doctrine as the fact that all four of these scholars for diverse reasons showed their preoccupation with the notion "primitive religion". In the case of Tiele and Van der Leeuw this preoccupation was above all of a-theological nature; what struck them most in the religions of non-literate peoples were the contrasts with the religions of the modern time and Christianity in particular; in their eyes primitive religion represented the opposite of the modern world and modern Christianity.

This mode of thought not only prevailed in theology but also in colonial-governmental circles. With Van der Leeuw the colonial bias was almost completely hidden behind his thoroughly theological view on the "unity of life".[11] Tiele, whose lifework, as I have argued elsewhere,[12] can be interpreted as a strategy of conquest aimed at the scholarly status of theology, reveals much more unambiguously than Van der Leeuw the colonial feelings of superiority of the learned European, who, for good measure, by virtue of his being a Christian theologian, deems himself to be on a more exalted level of religion than the objects of his study.

Van Baaren and Tiele had become a-theologians when they

started to write about the religious phenomena; the former even showed himself to be an anti-theologian if need be and prompted by the circumstances; a stance Fokke Sierksma adopted as a pervasive and enduring attitude in the long run. Both scholars advocated the equivalence of primitive religions and other forms of religious imaginative power—a point of view that to them was not only a strict and simple methodological rule of their discipline but above all a humanistic credo which, being left-wing intellectuals, they also applied outside their scholarly activity.[13] In this respect, they were typically representative of the time in which the Netherlands went through the harrowing process of decolonization.

Four masters of Dutch religious studies

The reasons for selecting the four representatives already mentioned are more or less self-evident. Primarily, the choice is based on the fact that their work is characterized by a broad interest in the religions of non-literate peoples, coupled with a demonstrable interest in theoretical questions to the problematic notion ''primitive religion'' as such.

Furthermore Tiele, Van der Leeuw, Van Baaren and Sierksma, each in their own way, have substantially influenced the development of the modern studies of religion in the Netherlands.[14]

Finally, the choice is justified by the fact that all four scholars mentioned also participated in the public discussion on religion outside the sphere of their special studies: Tiele and Van der Leeuw as theologians and members of their Christian churches, Sierksma as an essayist and controversialist, Van Baaren particularly as an artist.[15] Van der Leeuw was also exceptional in this respect; during the interbellum period, when his political interest had been aroused by questions involving progressive secularization and its consequences for what he referred to with the then current but sensitive term ''Netherlandish national community'', he was active first as an intellectual culture critic in the vein of Johan Huizinga, and subsequently—after the end of the Second World War—as a socialist politician and Minister of Education.[16] Within the

framework of our subject here it would therefore have been worth-
while to examine in more detail what position Van der Leeuw
adopted with regard to the birth of the Indonesian Republic—a
question, for that matter, which caused the overthrow of the
Schermerhorn cabinet of which Van der Leeuw was a member. But
such an investigation would require a separate study of the political
archives which would lead us far beyond the scope of our subject
and must therefore be put aside.

"Armchair anthropology"

   In order to be able to compare the divergent definitions of the
notion "primitive religions", we must, first of all, pay attention to
the use of the available sources. All four of the scholars under
review were "armchair anthropologists". None of them ever did
any systematic fieldwork or even superficially observed one or more
cultures of non-literal peoples in person. Yet, too, there is a dif-
ference on this point between Tiele and Van der Leeuw on the one
hand and Sierksma and Van Baaren on the other. It is a distinction
that not only related to the circumstances of the time in which they
worked but is also closely connected with their idea of "primitive
religion".

C.P. Tiele: the closed world of primitive religion [17]

   Tiele, a lifelong searcher for those structural laws which gov-
erned the ontogenesis of religion, straight away embraced the
theory of Sir Edward Tylor who, all historical change notwithstand-
ing, saw in the conception of the soul an uninterrupted continuity
between "the philosophy of the savage thinker" and "the modern
professor of theology". Yet there is one important element in
Tylor's theory of animism which is in flat contradiction with the
way of thinking of the nineteenth-century professor of Christian
theology that Tiele was. Indeed apart from the representation of the
soul from which animism derives its name, he sees the mentality of
the non-literate peoples as a closed system, a prison of the mind,
in which there is no distinction between the objective and the sub-
jective, phantasy and reality, internal or external phenomena.

Tiele, unlike his example, Tylor, stays utterly perplexed by the question how mankind has ever been able to escape from this prison. In his inaugural lecture from 1873[18] he dismisses the problem by simply stating that the traces of primitive mentality in later evolutionary phases are to be interpreted from their context rather than from their origin, a statement he never retracted.[19] So primitive religion is to Tiele a closed intellectual structure, a phenomenon characterized by false consciousness. He therefore thinks it unnecessary to pay much attention to the source material, nor does he see any reason why one should make any distinction between, say, the religions of the peoples of the Pacific Ocean and those of the Indians of North-America. This is all the more remarkable because he owed his repute as a scholar to the assiduity he applied to his special field of study, the religions of classical antiquity in the Near and Middle East, to the research into primary sources and the languages through which these had been transmitted. But to illustrate his preconceived ideas about "primitive religion" he contented himself with the odd manual, e.g. that by the then famous German ethnographer Waitz.

Van der Leeuw: unity of life[20]

Although Van der Leeuw was Tiele's direct opposite in many respects, the fact that he rejected Tylor's evolutionism and, instead, embraced Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's theory of primitive mentality led him to results which in practice were not radically different. To him, the primitive mentality is a permanent structure of the mind rather than a historical, evolutionary phase.[21] The most important characteristic of this structure is "unity of life"—absence of differentiation in culture and thought. More than did Tiele, Van der Leeuw realized that religion is constituted by thought and imagination as well as by activity. Nevertheless he, too, saw the whole of thinking, imagining and acting of a non-literate culture as dominated by one structural idea: undifferentiatedness.

This profoundly a-historical representation of things crops up in Van der Leeuw's work from the time he started publishing.[22] It went hand in hand with a highly wayward way of treating ethnographic sources. Van der Leeuw had an extensive body of

source material on a-scriptural peoples and their religions at his disposal and his knowledge of the secondary and theoretical literature was much more extensive than that of Tiele, even if at the same time it was extremely selective. On the one hand this was due to his aversion to a social science that, in his opinion, degenerated all too easy into a vulgar reductionist empiricism, but on the other hand also to his preconceived idea that "primitive" and "modern" formed the two foci of an ellipse on the perimeter of which all cultural phenomena from the past and the present could be situated.

So, he invariably referred to "primitive religion" in the singular, and for the purpose of documenting himself on the subject of primitive religion he could as well consult a theorist like Marcel Mauss as Grönbeck's monograph on the religion of the old Germans or popular writings about customs of Dutch farmers living in the middle of nowhere.

Rather than in the ethnographic literature at his disposal, the deepest source of Van der Leeuw's notion of "primitivity" is, as far as I can see, to be found in theology. The structure of the undifferentiatedness has primarily theological roots, and this comes out clearest when Van der Leeuw does not describe or argue it but applies it in the framework of his culture-critical work. A clear case of this point is the line of reasoning in his famous book on religion and art.[23]

The conflict between western culture and Christian religion which forms the basis of this theological aesthetic is itself an issue of differentiation. Van der Leeuw is convinced that this modern differentiation leads both art and religion into a hopeless impasse, out of which they will both have to return to what might be called a second primitivity. The fact, that he sees this radical return only happen as the Day of Judgment is of less importance than that he, starting from a very static conception of religion—Rudolph Otto's idealtypic notion of "The Holy"[24]—describes the ontogenesis of religions in terms of a progressive process of emaciation, and shows a romantic bias for such art forms as the puppet-show on the grounds of this being "primitive", along with an almost blind abhorrence of the film because of its being allegedly "modern" while going under the disguise of "primitivity" by means of technical gimmicks converting the static picture into movement.[25]

Th. P. Van Baaren: primitive religion as a mirror for man[26]

Van Baaren, in his deservedly famous article in the *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* and later in a monograph, once for all finished with this notion of "primitive religion".[27] On the basis of a vast knowledge of the ethnological literature—a knowledge he was to keep adding to and renewing until he died—he put an end to the tradition of "primitive religion" as a single quantity introduced in the Netherlands by Tiele and Van der Leeuw. In his case, too, we are struck by his ingenuity in using his sources, with a complete lack of prejudice against the nature and method of this social science which to him is not an auxiliary science for the benefit of the more profound contemplations of the comparatist, but simply a source of information for a number of specific, regional areas of study, in the way that the historical science provides other disciplines with information. Following A.A. Gerbrands' footsteps, he did away with the misleading term "primitive" and replaced it with the term non-literate or "a-scriptual".[28] It was a matter of more than merely a terminological innovation, for from now on the thus described differed from other cultures and religions in only one respect, to wit the absence of an artificial memory theoretically accessible to the whole language community. Now, it may be held against Van Baaren that he treated this difference too much as a purely formal matter and that he failed to appreciate the far-reaching consequences of having artificial memories to cultures and religions.[29] But that does not alter the fact that by this felicitous find virtually all mystifications attached to the notion "primitive" in the work of previous authors were disposed of at one fell swoop. A-scriptural peoples from now on no longer represented a reserve of archaic states of consciousness, as Tiele would have it, or typical representatives of undifferentiated awareness, as they were with Van der Leeuw—in one stroke they had become our equivalent contemporaries.[30] Suffice it just to call to mind political concepts such as the South-African "separate development" or "apartheid" (*eiesoortige ontwikkeling*) to realize that the scientific point of view as propounded by Gerbrands and Van Baaren precludes any colonial superiority complex—indeed a consequence Van Baaren convincingly applied to the religions as well as to the arts of a-scriptual peoples.[31]

It is a viewpoint that not only changed the colonial, Euro-centric aspect of Dutch studies of religion; also the notion "religion as such" as used in these studies was affected by it. Tiele's theologically inspired evolutionism became obsolete and replaced by Van der Leeuw's bipolar structure, a romanticized idealization of the a-scriptural religions—again motivated by profoundly theological arguments!—had taken a shape which must be considered as a scientific complement to the typical colonialist sentimental outlook upon the dominated peoples.

Van Baaren effectively challenged this idealization, with the result that religious criticism—here to be seen as criticism of the phenomenon religion as such, not just of certain historical forms of religions—once again became instrumental in religious studies, just as it had been during the European Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. Van Baaren's critical attitude towards religion occurs on every single page of his work, just as Van der Leeuw makes a passionate plea for the Christian faith throughout his work, not so much for its visible forms as for what the theologian Van der Leeuw saw as its unadulterated core. Van Baaren's criticism of religion, usually implicit and humorously worded, was mostly to be read between the lines. In fact, though he treated religion and religious people with due respect, it was only the violation of standards of art which could make him livid.

F. Sierksma: primitive religion as a model of all religion [32]

A similar wrath was explicit in Van Baaren's friend and colleague Fokke Sierksma. For Sierksma, the study of religion was a battlefield, where the major issues of European culture were at stake. This was not just an obvious metaphor from the pen of a temperamental scholar. Sierksma was moulded in the resistance against the German oppressor during the occupation of the Second World War. To his mind, his involvement with religious studies was a continuation of that battle with scholarly means—the battle of an intellectual who, as he used to say, "understands more than he can ccope with".

To him, ethnology was not only a reliable source of information about the cultures and religions of a-scriptural peoples. It was the

field of religious studies proper. In a paper to be delivered at the
occasion of the centenary of the oldest chair for the history of
religions in the Netherlands, in 1977, he advocated an exodus of
this discipline from the Faculty of Divinity to the sub-faculty of
Cultural Anthropology. When, in a preparatory consultation, I
expressed my doubts with regard to this proposal, as I knew that
religion was no longer a subject of primary importance to
anthropologists while, for good measure, anthropology could not
boast of more unanimity about methodology and strategy of
research than was found amond theologians, he flew into a rage,
tore up his manuscript and stated that, if that were true, he was at
his wit's end. His untimely death has prevented him from per-
sonally defending this point of view in public; but his plea, of which
there was apparently a second copy, was posthumously published
by his pupils, and thus preserved for later generations.[33]

The intended move to the social science meant much more to
Sierksma than merely a release from what, to him, had become the
stranglehold of theological bias. He saw in it an opportunity to
release the comparative study of religion from its isolation and to
turn it into what it ought to be in view of its complex object: an
interdisciplinary science. He himself contributed to this ideal by
methodologically using depth psychology in his two great studies on
the religions of a-scriptural peoples[34], a method he had already
advocated in the doctoral thesis he wrote under the guidance of G.
Van der Leeuw.

Via psychology, in the end, he came to ethology, from which
discipline he expected a salutary influence on religious studies.[35]
Indeed Sierksma's research into comparative religion, in particular
that about a-scriptural religions, may well be characterized as an
ethology of religion. He was concerned with closely observing
religious behavior—and, having found a pattern, he then tried to
explain it by means of insights gained from sociology as well as
from depth psychology. This urge for scientific explanation instead
of mere understanding of religion distinguishes him from all of his
predecessors, including Van Baaren who in this respect has always
remained a phenomenologist.[36] This emphasis Sierksma put and
the behavioral aspect of religion was, of course, strongly fostered by
the philosophical-anthropological model he was already looking for

in his doctoral thesis, which he eventually found with Helmuth Plessner and which he elaborated himself in his monograph on the projection-mechanism in religion. This model, though constructed by a biologist, is not purely biologistic, as it contains a sharp distinction between the excentric position of *homo sapiens* and the structural relations of all other living creatures with their environment. For Plessner, the validity of this model had to be demonstrated not only on the basis of neuro-physiological observation, but also by an analysis of the social behavior of the species. This strong emphasis in Plessner's philosophy on behavioral aspects, together with the formal character of the model, held a great fascination for Sierksma as a comparatist of religion. He needed for his interdisciplinary theory of religion a firm empirical basis as well as a non-ethnocentric hypothesis about the nature of man. It also explains to a great extent, why Sierksma began his scientific career, like all historians of religion, with the study of texts and why, after studying assiduously Freud and Jung, he found himself in the Zoological Laboratory of Leiden University, spending day after day with the observation of the behavior of sticklebacks.

Seen in this perspective, the view of religion changes decisively. The intellectually handicapped savage of Tiele and Van der Leeuw's primitive believer emprisoned in the unity of life disappear behind Van Baaren's a-scriptural creator of culture. And then with Sierksma, lo and behold: the so-called primitive is on equal footing with the professor, regardless of the fact that the last has books and electronic memory at his disposal, while the former has not, as both of them are subject to the same mechanism of projection and deprojection. And their relgious activity, however different, is in both cases equally related to the amazing imaginative powers of the dressed ape.

From now on, whenever comparative religion draws the demarcation lines in the Labyrinth of the Gods, they no longer distinguish between primitive and modern religions but between the projecting majority or religious mankind and the radically deprojecting minority, between, on the one side, the millions of believers of various creeds, and on the other side the Theravada-Buddhists and the odd mystic from all over the world.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Sierksma no longer has a need for a

separate notion "primitive religion" the phenomena hitherto thus labeled being distinct from religion in general only by the historically accidental acculturation conflict they bear witness of. Therefore, once he has reached this point, he can do with the very minimum definition of religion: "the belief that there is Something".

The notion "primitive religion" has not become extinct—in Dutch religious studies it still has its supporters who bring forward their point of view with much more incisive reasoning and subtle philosophical arguments than their predecessors.[37] Nevertheless, (Sierksma's having remained a maverick within the Dutch institutional scholarly order notwithstanding) I believe a movement has been set going that is irreversible. The vanishing of all colonial perspectives and its concomitant erosion of theological ethnocentrism have turned the notion "primitive religion" into no more than a pragmatic indication of religions which under specific socio-cultural and historico-geographical conditions produce a specific behavior not essentially different from other patterns of religious behavior.

Epilogue

To sum up what I have tried to say, a quotation from Michèle Duchet's splendid study on the beginnings of anthropology in Western Europe in the eighteenth century seems apposite: "The world of the savage itself, as a subject of curiosity or research, in the long run perceived as an object that deserved special kmowledge, yet does not exist but in the perspective of the deforming prism of European history."[38]

In Dutch comparative studies of religion, as in those of other European countries, the deforming prism, two hundred years after the period of the Enlightenment, is not yet completely discarded. But to say the least, we no longer trust it to be a reliable scientific instrument, and we struggle hard to find better tools. With that we Europeans could use some help from other parts of the world, where comparative religious studies are perpetrated in a different cultural context and where it fulfills other cultural needs.

Rijnsburgerweg 36
NL 2333 AB Leiden   LAMMERT LEERTOUWER

¹ The author wants to express his thanks to Mrs C.C.M. Heesterman-Visser for her translation of this paper.

² See for Kern: Hanna t'Hart,"Imagine Leiden without Kern'', in: Willem Otterspeer (Editor), *Leiden Oriental Connections, 1850-1940, Studies in the History of Leiden University, Vol. 5,* Leiden/New York/Kobenhavn/Köln 1989, p. 126 ff.; for Snouck Hurgronje: J. Brugman, ''Snouck Hurgronje's study of Islamic Law'', in the same volume, p. 82 ff.; P.S. Van Koningsveld, *Snouck Hurgronje en de Islam. Acht Artikelen over leven en werk van een oriëntalist uit het koloniale tijdperk.* Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid, Leiden 1988.

³ Snouck Hurgronje has learned spy during the Açeh-war, cf. Van Koningsveld, *o.c.*.

⁴ Cf. e.g. Van der Leeuw's uncritical acceptance of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's theory on primitive mentality—an acceptance not even changed by the revocation of the theory by the French master himself at the end of his life, see M. Leenhardt (Ed.), *Les Carnets de Lucien Lévy-Bruhl,* Paris 1948.

⁵ See Menno ter Braak, ''Afscheid van domineesland'', in: *Verzameld Werk,* dl. I, Amsterdam 1949.

⁶ Characterized by C.P. Tiele, the first holder of the chair of history of religions at Leiden University, with the notorious adage ''Theology has as much to do with scholarship as the Habsburg double-monarchy with a modern state'', in: *De Gids* 1866.

⁷ The foundation of chairs in religious studies at the universities in the Netherlands was only made possible by the implementation of the Higher Education Act in 1876, which in fact turned the Faculties of Divinity into Departments of Religion. A striking illustration of the thesis propounded here is the fact that these days this regulation is again being challenged on the part of one of the protestant churches in the Netherlands.

⁸ See C.P. Tiele, *De Plaats van de Godsdiensten der Natuurvolken in de Godsdienstgeschiedenis, redevoering bij het aanvaarden van het professoraat aan het Seminarium der Remonstranten, den 13en Februari 1873, gehouden door C.P. Tiele,* Amsterdam 1873.

⁹ Cf. G. Van der Leeuw, *De Primitieve Mensch en de Religie. Anthropologische Studie,* Groningen-Batavia 1937.

¹⁰ Helmuth Plessner, *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch. Einleitung in die philosophische Anthropologie,* Berlin-Leipzig 1928. The lasting influence of Plessner's anthropology upon Dutch religious studies is strikingly demonstrated by L. Minnema, *Bespiegelingen aan het venster, anthropologische bouwstenen voor een vergelijkend-godsdienstwetenschappelijke verheldering van interreligieuze dialoog (doctoral thesis Kampen Theological University),* Kampen 1990.

¹¹ See G. Van der Leeuw, *De primitieve Mensch....;* and Jan Hermelink, *Verstehen und Bezeugen. Der theologische Ertrag der ''Phänomenologie der Religion'' von Gerardus Van der Leeuw,* München 1960.

¹² L. Leertouwer, ''C.P. Tiele's Strategy of Conquest'', see note 19.

¹³ Cf. Th. P. Van Baaren, *Menschen wie wir,* Gütersloh 1964, Ch. VI. The tone and style of this last chapter with the programmatic title ''Wir Menschen'' distinguish themselves from those of the previous ones by a certain polemic pathos, lacking or at the most to be read between the lines in the rest of Van Baaren's work, while here it is explicit. With Sierksma it invariably is. One clear instance among many is his *Tussen Twee Vuren,* Amsterdam 1952, the pamphlet in which Sierksma's essayistic talent joins battle with a host of Dutch Christian theologians, who had done their utmost to make mincemeat of Simon Vestdijk's controversial book *De Toekomst der Religie (The Future of Religion),* Arnhem 1952.

¹⁴ See W.Br. Kristensen "C.P. Tiele", in: *Nieuw Nederlands Biografisch Woorden-boek*, col. 1332-1334, Leiden 1918; For Van der Leeuw: J. Waardenburg, "Religion between Reality and Idea. A Century of Phenomenology of Religion in the Netherlands", in *NUMEN* 19 (1972) pp. 128-203. Sierksma's influence was, I think, mainly due to the fact that ever since his dissertation with Van der Leeuw *Freud, Jung en de Religie,* Assen 1951, he confronted the one-sidedly history-oriented Dutch religious studies with the results of modern developmental and perceptional psychology, as well as with his activities as an essayist, which furthered the accessability of his scientific insights for a broader public. It is to early yet to determine whether Van Baaren's influence will be lasting, so shortly after his death in 1989. But so much is certain, that he had earned an international reputation, see Ursula King, "Historical and Phenomenological Approaches to the Study of Religion. Some major developments and issues under debate since 1950", in: Frank Whaling (Editor), *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Vol. 1, The Humanities, Religion and Reason 27, Berlin—New York—Amsterdam 1984, p. 94 ff.; last but not least he has broken new ground in the field of the iconography of religions, in particular those of a-scriptural peoples.

¹⁵ Theo Van Baaren, together with his wife Gertrud Van Baaren-Pape, while still a student at the University of Utrecht, was one of the leading personalities in the Dutch expressionist and absurdist movement in the pictorial arts and literature; later on, he became an expert on ethnographic art and brought together a fine collection, which he bequeathed to the University of Groningen. The Ethnographic Museum *Gerardus Van der Leeuw*, founded by Van Baaren, now holds a permanent exposition of this collection. Van Baaren was a poet of some reknown; after he resigned his office at Groningen University in 1982, he published a new volume of poems nearly every year, until his death in 1989. See *Bulletin, Literair Magazine*, 20, The Hague 1990, with contributions of various authors on Van Baaren's work as an artist.

¹⁶ See L. Leertouwer, "Gerardus Van der Leeuw as a critic of culture", in: Hans G. Kippenberg & Brigitte Luchesi (Hrsg.), *Religionswissenschaft und Kulturkritik,* Marburg 1991, p. 57-63.

¹⁷ C.P. Tiele (1830-1902), 1873-1877 Professor at the Remonstrant Seminary, Leiden; 1877-1900 Professor of History of Religions at the University of Leiden.

¹⁸ See C.P. Tiele, *De Plaats van de Godsdiensten der Natuurvolken in de Gods-dienstgeschiedenis, redevoering bij het aanvaarden van het professoraat aan het Seminarium der Remonstranten, den 13en Februari 1873, gehouden door C.P. Tiele,* Amsterdam 1873.

¹⁹ L. Leertouwer, "C.P. Tiele's Strategy of Conquest", in: Willem Otterspeer (Editor), *Leiden Oriental Connections, 1850-1940. Studies in the History of Leiden University, Vol. 5,* Leiden/New York/Kobenhavn/Köln 1989, p. 161 ff.

²⁰ G. Van der Leeuw (1890-1950), 1918-1950 Professor of History of Religions at the State University of Groningen.

²¹ G. Van der Leeuw, *De primitieve Mensch....,* passim.

²² See G. Van der Leeuw, *Historisch Christendom*, Utrecht 1919, p. 54. There, Van der Leeuw ascribes a deficient historical awareness to the a-scriptural peoples, explaining this alleged weakness by assuming that "he (primitive man, *LL*) does not in principle distinguish between time and eternity. This, of course, is utter nonsense: if this were true, an a-scriptural people would be unable to distinguish between its ancestors and their grand-children, nor could it remember the times for its seasonal rites, etc.

²³ G. Van der Leeuw, *Wegen en Grenzen tussen religie en kunst,* second edition, Amsterdam 1948.

²⁴ See Rudolph Otto, *Das Heilige. Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen,* Gotha 1917.

²⁵ Van der Leeuw, *Wegen en Grenzen* ....., p. 207 ff.

²⁶ Theo P. Van Baaren (1912-1989), was appointed 1952 as successor of Van der Leeuw to the Groningen chair of History of Religions, founder of the Institute for Religious Iconography and of the Ethnographic Museum Van der Leeuw at that University.

²⁷ Th. P. Van Baaren, "De ethnologische basis van de phaenomenologie van G. Van der Leeuw", in: *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 11 (1957) p. 321-353. Id., *Menschen wie wir,* Gütersloh 1964.

²⁸ The term does not imply, that in an a-scriptural culture there is no form of script and scripture at all. For example, the Toba Batak of Sumatra are called a-scriptural, notwithstanding the fact, that their religous functionaries wrote and read astrological and other sacred books, because these forms of scripture were esoteric, only meant for the eyes of the initiated. Nowadays, as a result of Christian and Muslim missionary activity and of the education policies of the government, the Batak culture of course has become scriptural.

²⁹ See, e.g., his treatment of the theme "Heilig boek" (Sacred Book) in: Th.P. Van Baaren and L. Leertouwer, *Doolhof der Goden (Labyrinth of the Gods),* Groningen 1980, p. 215 ff., where only with regard to the aspect of the sacred book's authority the complications attached to an artificial memory in a religious context are briefly touched upon, but not or barely discussed. In 1980, today's "information-society" was still long in coming!

³⁰ Cf. Th.P. Van Baaren, *Bezielend Beelden,* Amsterdam 1962, an introduction to ethnographic art, in which, for that matter, the adjective "primitive", though firmly rejected as an attribute of religious phenomena, is still being retained for purely practical reasons to point to the art-forms of a-scriptural peoples.

³¹ Th.P. Van Baaren, *Bezielend Beelden,* passim and *id., Korwars and Korwar style. Art and Ancestor Worship in North-West New Guinea,* Paris-The Hague 1965.

³² F. Sierksma (1917-1977), was in 1972 appointed to be senior lecturer in comparative religous anthropology in Leiden; 1973 professor in the history of religions at the same University.

³³ See F. Sierksma, *Honderd jaar godsdienstwetenschap,* published by the Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid, Leiden 1977, edited by F.L. Boon.

³⁴ Cf. F. Sierksma, *Een nieuwe hemel en een nieuwe aarde, messianistische en eschatologische bewegingen en voorstellingen bij primitieve volken (New Heaven, New Earth—messianistic and eschatological movements and notions among primitive peoples),* second edition, with an epilogue by G.W. Drost (M.A.), Groningen 1979; and Id., *Religie, Sexualiteit en agressie, een cultuurpsychologische bijdrage tot de verklaring van de spanning tussen de sexen, met een voorwoord van Prof. dr Th.P. Van Baaren (Religion, Sexuality and Agression, a contribution to the explanation of the struggle between the sexes from the point of view of the psychology of culture, with a Foreword by Prof. dr Th.P. Van Baaren),* Groningen 1979.

³⁵ Cf. F. Sierksma, "De geklede aap tussen ethologie en anthropologie ("The Dressed Ape between ethology and anthropology"), in: G.P. Barends (Ed.), *Ethologie, de biologie van gedrag,* Wageningen 1981, p. 257 ff.

³⁶ See L. Leertouwer, "Inquiry into Religious Behaviour, a theoretical reconnaissance", in: Th.P. Van Baaren and H.J.W. Drijvers, *Religion, Culture and Methodology, papers of the Groningen working-group for the study of fundamental problems and methods of science of religion,* Paris-The Hague 1973, p. 80 ff.; Id., *Zonder*

Stralenkrans, over het verklaren van religieuze verschijnselen (Religion without a nimbus, about the explanation of religious phenomena), Leiden 1980.

[37] Cf. Wilhelm Dupré, *Religion in primitive cultures. A Study in Ethnophilosophy (Religion and Reason 9)*, The Hague-Paris 1975, p. 245 ff.

[38] See Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au Siècle des Lumières. Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvétius, Diderot*, Paris 1971, p. 19.

THE MAKING OF AN IMMORTAL:
THE EXALTATION OF HO CHIH-CHANG

RUSSELL KIRKLAND

Summary

An unusual case of a Chinese "immortal" *(hsien)* was the T'ang dynasty statesman Ho Chih-chang (659-744). During his life, Ho displayed little interest in religion until a late-life ordination as a Taoist priest. During the Sung dynasty, however, he was gradually elevated to "immortality" in a series of hagiographical tales. In the 10th-century *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*, Ho appears as a character who learns humility. In the 11th-century *Kao-tao chuan*, he appears as a character who yields to the Taoist ideals of restraint and orderly progress. In the 13th-century *Chia-ting Ch'ih-ch'eng chih*, Ho appears as a master of *pharmika* who ascends to heaven after a life of several centuries. In that text, the figure of Ho no longer has moral significance: he represents a romantic ideal of "the immortal," but no longer serves as a meaningful spiritual exemplar. In fact, in that text he ceases to function as a representative of Taoist values, for Taoists always aspire to a moral and spiritual elevation, a personal perfection for which the concept of "immortality" serves as a potent metaphor. I suggest that the compilers of such texts appropriated honored historical figures like Ho in an effort to persuade sceptical members of the Chinese elite that "immortality" was a valid and respectable ideal.

In the religious history of China, the path to godhood was, in effect, open to all: the complex Chinese pantheon is replete not only with countless deities in the strict sense, but also with numerous beings who were once human, men and women who managed to achieve posthumous divinity through their earthly deeds. To a certain degree, the same pattern held true for the category of beings known as "immortals" *(hsien)*: while some "immortals" were conceived to exist in rarefied spheres beyond the human world, exceptional humans occasionally managed to transform themselves and attained the status of *hsien*.[1]

The pursuit of "immortality" has long been associated with the Taoist religion. In the 1930's, the pioneer in the Western study of Taoism, Henri Maspero, argued that "from the beginning, Taoism had been a doctrine of individual salvation which claimed to guide the adept to immortality."[2] Maspero attempted to demonstrate that such a doctrine was present even in the *Lao-tzu* and

Chuang-tzu (though his arguments are not entirely convincing). Scholars today, however, tend to trace the origins of religious Taoism not to those classical philosophical texts, but rather to the Han dynasty, when new religious movements sprang from a utopian socio-political ideal, as encapsulated in a series of texts known by the general title of *T'ai-p'ing ching* ["Scripture of Grand Tranquility"].[3] One grants that the pursuit of immortality through the sublimation of physical processes certainly existed in Han times, as demonstrated by references in texts like the *Lun-heng* of Wang Ch'ung (27-ca. 100 CE).[4] But it seems to have had no direct consanguinity with the religious movements that gave birth to organized Taoism.

In the imagery of Holmes Welch, the pursuit of immortality was one of several streams that eventually flowed into the broader "Taoist" tradition.[5] It is true that several segments of the Taoist tradition did adopt the ideal of "immortality" as a goal, or perhaps more accurately, as a potent metaphor for the ultimate goal—personal perfection and union with the Tao. But it has not been generally recognized that the pursuit of immortality *per se* always remained an element of Chinese religious culture that was in certain respects quite distinct from the ideals of Taoism as a whole.

Just as some *hsien* (and would-be *hsien*) never had any connection with Taoism, it is likewise true that many great Taoists are not known ever to have pursued the status of *hsien*. In Taoist literature, the status of "immortal" was generally reserved for men and women whose lives were seen as having exemplified the fulfillment of the highest Taoist ideals (however articulated). But some of the most illustrious historical leaders of the Taoist tradition remained human beings (however venerable), and were seldom depicted by later writers as having attained any heavenly station. Indeed, many ascended immortals are said to have led lives of earthly obscurity, accomplished, perhaps, in spiritual pursuits, but lacking social standing or acclamation among the educated elite (among whom many of the leaders of the Taoist religion were counted).[6]

It is therefore rather striking to encounter reports of a *hsien* whose earthly life had been that of a secular court official, almost totally devoid of any trace of religious ideals or activities. The figure in question is a T'ang dynasty statesman named Ho Chih-chang (659-

744). Ho's official career is thoroughly documented in the two official histories of the T'ang dynasty, the tenth-century *Chiu T'ang shu* and the eleventh-century *Hsin T'ang shu*. According to these sources, Ho's career in the T'ang government spanned five full decades. In the course of his long and distinguished career, Ho held the post of Director of the Imperial Library, two positions of responsibility over the imperial crown prince, several academic posts, and the Vice-Presidency of three separate ministries of the government.

Elsewhere, I have presented a detailed study of the life of Ho Chih-chang and of the historical issues raised by his official biographies.[7] It suffices here to note that during his long career, Ho is never suggested to have taken any active interest in Taoism, or, for that matter, in religious affairs of any description. His biographies (and other contemporary materials) present him as a purely secular figure, as a public servant, poet, calligrapher, and bon vivant. But rather oddly, they report that after he reached the age of 85, Ho resigned from public service and took ordination as a *tao-shih* (a Taoist priest). This was quite an extraordinary event, and the biographies provide no coherent explanation for it. One version (in the *Chiu T'ang shu*) asserts that Ho became ill, and decided to take holy orders during a period of mental disorientation. The other version (in the *Hsin T'ang shu*) states that at the end of his career Ho had a peculiar dream, in which he visited "the dwelling of the Lord (*Ti*)," whereupon he petitioned to retire and take ordination. In any event, the emperor granted Ho permission to enter the priesthood, and soon thereafter, Ho passed away in his native village.

Because Ho displayed no perceptible Taoist tendencies until virtually the end of his life, few of the extant accounts of his life contain much Taoist rhetoric, or any elements that relate him to the ideas or practices of the Taoist tradition. Most of the accounts— even those preserved in the *Tao-tsang* (the Taoist canon)—dwell almost exclusively upon his administrative career. Be that as it may, there are a few biographical texts that do present the life of Ho Chih-chang within some type of religious context, and it is with those texts that the present study is concerned.

Ho Chih-chang in the T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi

The first non-standard account of events in Ho's life appears in the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* ["Comprehensive Anthology of the T'ai-p'ing Reign"], an encyclopedic anthology compiled under imperial auspices and completed in 978 CE. The *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* assembled real and fictive records concerning unusual people, strange phenomena, and popular customs and beliefs—matters that were considered in some sense inappropriate for the "standard" anthology, the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*.[8] Though it is an official compilation dating to the period between the two *T'ang shu*, the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*'s account of Ho Chih-chang bears no relation to any of the depictions of him in either of the standard histories. The text reads as follows:

> Ho Chih-chang had his residence in the Hsüan-p'ing ward of the western capital [i.e. Ch'ang-an]. Across the street was a small door made of wooden planks. He often saw an old man riding a donkey leave and enter through it. After five or six straight years, he saw the old man with his countenance and clothing just as it had been before. In addition, [Ho] did not [ever] see [the old man's] family members. He inquired within the neighborhood, and everyone said that [the man] was old Wang, who sold cash strings in the western market, with no other occupation. It was extraordinary!
>
> Once on a leisure day [Ho] visited [the man]. The elder welcomed him very respectfully. [He] had only a young lad as a servant. Ho then asked [the old man] his occupation. The elder willingly engaged in verbal interchange. Consequently, they began to see each other socially, gradually increasing in esteem, and gradually became intimate in their conversation. [The elder] thereupon spoke of being adept at the arts of the 'yellow and white' [i.e. alchemy]. Ho, in his simplicity, placed great weight in [the elder's communications], and desired to attach himself to him and serve him.
>
> Later, [Ho] and his wife were keeping a brilliant pearl. He said himself that he had obtained this pearl in former days, and had protected it carefully through many seasons. He then presented it to the elder, seeking [to have him] speak of the methods of the Tao. The elder turned the brilliant pearl over to the young lad, ordering him to barter it for cakes and return. The lad took the pearl and obtained for it more than thirty *hu*-cakes [round cakes of baked wheat]. Ho

thought to himself that the precious pearl had been disposed of very
lightly, and was very displeased. The elder said:

'The Tao can be attained in the heart. [But] how can it exist in [the
midst of] vigorous striving? If niggardliness had not yet ceased, the
skills [of spiritual practice] have no means of becoming complete.
[You] must needs [repair to] a desolate valley deep in the mountains,
and, seeking diligently, attain it. It cannot be obtained in the
marketplace.'

Ho seemed clearly awakened. He thanked [the elder] and
departed. In several days he lost track of where the elder was.

Ho accordingly sought to retire from public office, enter Taoism,
and return to his native locality.[9]

Unlike many accounts in the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*, this account
contains none of the characteristics of a standard Chinese
biography; even the virtually mandatory report of Ho's alternate
name and place of registry is lacking. Instead, the reader is
presented with a single didactic tale, ostensibly derived from a
source entitled the *Yüan-hua chi* ["Accounts of Primal Transforma-
tions"]. I have failed to locate any further information concerning
that work; if it ever truly existed, it is long since lost. In any event,
the tale recorded here clearly derives from a different tradition from
that represented by Ho's standard biographies.

As clearly as this account is not a biography, it is just as clearly
not a *Wundererzählung*. While the old man whom Ho meets is cer-
tainly portrayed as an eccentric recluse, it is merely hinted that he
does not age normally. If "old Wang" was actually an immortal,
it is not asserted openly: the reader is left to reach that conclusion
on his own. And the allusion to alchemy plays little part in the story
as a whole. The *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* account, then, actually con-
stitutes a morality tale. The point of the story is that Ho learned
to forego his attachment to material things and trust to the wisdom
of his spiritual superior. He is credited here with no visible virtues,
Taoist or otherwise: he is merely the character who learns his
lesson. As Taoist philosophy, the tale's moral is fairly
unsophisticated: any literate person acquainted with the basic
values of Taoism (or perhaps even Buddhism) would have been
capable of formulating it. As a representation of "Taoism," then,
the account is shallow indeed. We may conclude that the story was

intended not for serious devotees of Taoism, but rather for a general audience.

The denouement of the story is that, as a result of his acceptance of his lesson, Ho forewent worldly success and devoted himself to a religious life. But from a biographical perspective, the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* account is virtually useless: though the protagonist bears Ho's name, there is little in the text to identify him with the historical individual whose life is chronicled in the *T'ang shu* accounts. Here, as with many of the tales that surround the figure of Yeh Fa-shan (a wonder-worker of the same period), one could easily substitute another name for Ho's without significantly affecting the story.[10] Only the last line of the account relates to known events in Ho's life, and it may well be no more than an editorial addition. I propose that the original account was only a tale onto which Ho's name had for some reason been grafted. The *T'ai-p'ing* compiler would thus have added the conclusion in an effort to link the tale to Ho's actual life. No clear trace of the tale appears in any subsequent account of Ho's life. This fact is quite understandable, for while many of the accounts of Yeh Fa-shan perpetuated wonder-tales as though they were historical anecdotes, Yeh was a wondrous figure around whom such tales naturally tended to collect. Ho Chih-chang, on the other hand, was hardly a figure of that nature.

Ho Chih-chang in the Kao-tao chuan

A new image of Ho Chih-chang appears a century later in the *Kao-tao chuan* ["Lives of Eminent Taoists"], a biographical anthology by the little-known Taoist Chia Shan-hsiang (fl. 1086). The *Kao-tao chuan* was originally a fairly substantial work, but it was lost by Ming times, and has been partly reconstructed by the modern scholar Yen I-p'ing. Yen's research has yielded two quite distinct *Kao-tao chuan* entries on Ho, both derived from the *San-tung ch'ün-hsien lu* ["Register of the Collected Immortals of the Triune Crypts"], a twelfth-century anthology compiled by Ch'en Pao-kuang. These two entries represent the first accounts of Ho known to have been composed within a Taoist context[11]

In the *San-tung ch'ün-hsien lu*, the first entry on Ho is entitled, "Ho Requests the Chien Lake," while the second is entitled, "T'ung-ho

and the Ranks of Office.'' The two passages are highly divergent
in nature, and seem to derive from very different traditions. The
first entry (to which I shall refer as *Kao-tao chuan* A) is extremely
close in content and style to the biographies of Ho found in the
T'ang shu; it almost certainly utilized the *Hsin T'ang shu*, merely
deleting the details of Ho's career in government service. It is of
relatively little interest for the present undertaking. The second
entry, however, bears little resemblance to the first. This more
colorful text, which I shall call *Kao-tao chuan* B, reads as follows:

> During the *k'ai-yüan* period (713-742), when Ho Chih-chang was
> Director of the Imperial Library, he met the Elder of Penetrating
> Harmony (*T'ung-ho hsien-sheng*). [The latter] bestowed upon [Ho] an
> elixir (*tan*), and made a pronouncement to him, saying:
> 'First the covenant, and afterwards the transmission. In this way, the
> adherents of immortality [i.e., Taoist aspirants] are officially ranked,
> just like [those who ascend] the stages of official rank in government.
> One cannot advance swiftly, but must take yielding restraint as the
> prime concern. When one is yielding and restrained, one's desires are
> few. When one's desires are few, one's spirit is at ease. When one's
> spirit is at ease, then one does nothing and nothing is left undone.
> Revert to this and seek the Tao. [Such restraint is] like refusing [to
> accept] a horse for racing away. You have this aspiration.'
> [Ho] Chih-chang afterwards abdicated his position and petitioned to
> become a *tao-shih*.[12]

One cannot overlook the fact that the two passages that
reportedly originated in the *Kao-tao chuan* are, prima facie, difficult
to reconcile. Stylistically, *Kao-tao chuan* A is a nearly complete
biography: it includes the standard identifying formula, a character
summary, and a précis of Ho's career. But the format of *Kao-tao
chuan* B is quite different. It does specify the reign-period, and Ho's
office at the time of the episode, and at the end it refers to Ho by
his personal name alone (a convention of official historical composi-
tions). In addition, it opens and closes with secular references
relating the episode to the historical life of Ho Chih-chang, albeit
tenuously, and perhaps artificially. Nonetheless, *Kao-tao chuan* B
seems to contradict *Kao-tao chuan* A: instead of having Ho give up
secular life and enter Taoism as the result of an illness and a dream,
the B-text implies that Ho retired as a consequence of the encounter

with "the T'ung-ho Elder." (I have located no additional informa-
tion on this character, and it is difficult to determine whether or not
he may have been a historical person.)

Unlike *Kao-tao chuan* A, *Kao-tao chuan* B reflects a definite Taoist
background. In Chinese literature, meetings with masters of arcane
wisdom (which sometimes occur within dreams) are almost
uniformly the occasion for a dramatic scene or pronouncement.[13]
The episode described here conforms quite well with that conven-
tion: it opens with an act of profound moment (i.e.. conferral of
"the elixir"), and continues with a declamation of both momentary
relevance and universal import. Since the Elder's pronouncement
is prefaced by the conferral of the elixir of immortality, the reader
is led to seek the meaning of the pronouncement within the
universe of discourse of religious Taoism. The opening lines of the
address confirm that understanding: in pre-T'ang and T'ang
Taoism, devotees were indeed strictly ranked, and were awarded
efficacious texts and ritual knowledge in accordance with their dem-
onstrated spiritual attainments. Be that as it may, the bulk of the
Elder's address is given over to a lesson in Taoist self-cultivation,
the language and ideas of which are highly reminiscent of the *Tao
te ching*. What is noteworthy is that within the context of this
passage, those "Laotzean" ideas are adduced by way of explaining
the necessity of the principle of orderly transmission and progres-
sion. The philosophical lesson, then, is integrated into the context
of the religious concern with ultimate personal achievement
("immortality") and the stages of progression thereto.

Kao-tao chuan B thus serves a multiple purpose. On one level, it
supplies an ostensibly historical record that confirms Ho's purity of
purpose and his worthiness of advancing to immortality. On
another level, it explains a Taoist principle for others (including,
presumably, the reader) who might also aspire to the same goal.
The lesson of the passage is that advancement cannot be rushed,
but must proceed according to definite orderly procedures, in order
that it might correspond fully to the moral and spiritual progression
of the aspirant. The composer of the passage underscores the pro-
found import of this principle by couching it in the authoritative
rhetoric of the *Tao te ching*. The moral of the episode is clear: one
who follows the example of Ho Chih-chang—practicing yielding

restraint in order to attain the Tao—can hope eventually to attain immortality.

Two other points remain in regard to this passage. First, while both this text and the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* employ the figure of Ho Chih-chang to convey a moral regarding the proper method of seeking the Tao, the image of Ho in the two accounts is strikingly different. In the *T'ai-p'ing* text, Ho is portrayed as a man who esteems the ideals of Taoist perfection, but has not yet overcome his selfish, materialistic tendencies. While the reader is assuredly meant to learn from his example, it is largely a negative example: a person who acts as Ho initially did cannot expect to advance on the path. Only by "awakening" from such a myopic view of life, as Ho ultimatedly did, can one hope to progress toward the Tao. However, in the *Kao-tao chuan* B text, the T'ung-ho Elder declares that Ho Chih-chang is indeed characterized by the proper state of mind for spiritual progress; there is no suggestion of a need for further admonition, or for "awakening." One could conceivably rationalize that discrepancy by postulating a distinction in time-frames: Ho might have met the T'ung-ho Elder after having first been set on the right course by "old Wang." But such an effort to harmonize the two accounts is not only unnecessary, but actually inappropriate, for it distracts from an appreciation of the specific use to which each writer puts the figure of Ho Chih-chang. Each text clearly presents Ho not as a historical character whose life is the subject of biographical inquiry, but rather as a literary character woven into a narrative intended to edify and instruct. Since the aims of each author were distinct, it would be impertinent to conflate the two images of Ho Chih-chang.

Ho Chih-chang in the Chia-ting Ch'ih-ch'eng chih

The portrait of Ho Chih-chang presented in *Kao-tao chuan* B is echoed in a thirteenth-century local history, the *Chia-ting Ch'ih-ch'eng chih* ["Annals of Ch'ih-ch'eng (compiled during the) Chia-ting (reign)"].[14] The account of Ho presented in this text was allegedly based upon an obscure inscription stele. In actuality, it was almost certainly derived directly from the *Kao-tao chuan*. The entry reads as follows:

... Thoroughly learned in [the teachings of] Huang Lao, Director Ho obtained the mysteries of hygiene. He shouldered his booksack and sold pharmaceuticals. For several centuries he did not die. Afterwards, he ascended to immortality at Mt. T'ien-t'ai.

During the *yüan-ho* period (806-821), Ho regularly met him [i.e., the T'ung-ho Elder]. [At that time the Elder] conferred [upon him] the "Elixiric Scripture on Desisting from Grain" (*Tuan-ku tan ching*),[15] and said:

'If one closes one's mouth, and is inwardly magnanimous and outwardly yielding, then one can speak of the Tao. The Tao takes yielding restraint as the prime concern. When one is yielding and restrained, one's desires are few. When one's desires are few, one's spirit is at ease. When one's spirit is at ease, then one does nothing and nothing is left undone. To revert to this and seek the Tao is like wishing to walk in order to race away.'...

If I have correctly interpreted this somewhat obscure text, we find here the first and only evidence of a belief that Ho Chih-chang was ever regarded as a *hsien*. In no other source does one encounter the notion that Ho had employed pharmaceutical preparations, or that he achieved not only superhuman longevity, but also ascent without mortal demise.

It is indubitable that the historical life of Ho Chih-chang—as presented in contemporary documents and the standard biographies—was actually quite devoid of any involvement in "the mysteries of hygiene." One can only surmise that the episode from the *Kao-tao chuan*, in which the T'ung-ho Elder conveyed an elixir to Ho, had stimulated a belief (at least within some narrow circle) that Ho Chih-chang had in fact ingested some such elixir and thereby attained immortality. The remainder of the new elements in this text, then, would logically have developed as part of an attempt to fill out the picture of Ho Chih-chang as an immortal. This conjecture would seem to explain the reference to the *yüan-ho* period: if Ho spoke with T'ung-ho during the early ninth century, then he must certainly have lived on long past his presumed demise in the earlier *t'ien-pao* era. But since, according to this scenario, Ho Chih-chang had long since attained immortality, it would not be logical for T'ung-ho to have conferred an elixir upon him during the later *yüan-ho* period. So instead, the text presents T'ung-ho as

conferring upon Ho a Taoist text that is elsewhere unknown, and may have been a fictitious element invented just so that T'ung-ho might have something substantial to bestow upon him.

The Transformation of the Image of Ho Chih-chang

The differences between this story and its *Kao-tao chuan* prototype seem at first to be fairly subtle. Upon careful inspection, however, they prove to be quite significant indeed. The *Kao-tao chuan* account possesses a thematic coherence that is lacking in the Chia-ting text. In the *Kao-tao chuan*, the conferral of the elixir is quite clearly intended as a reward for Ho's moral achievements. There, the Elder declares that Ho's dedication to seeking the Tao through yielding restraint earned him a chance at immortality. The elixir is at once the symbol of that immortality, and—presumably—the means by which Ho might attain it. Yet, the composer of the *Kao-tao chuan* does not explicitly portray Ho as ingesting the elixir or attaining immortality. Rather, he states that as a result of the meeting, Ho ''abdicated his position and petitioned to become a *tao-shih*.'' The message here is quite consistent with the import of the opening of T'ung-ho's address in the *Kao-tao chuan* version: all things come in due course when one patiently follows standard procedure. Hence, even though Ho's dedication has earned recognition, the ''elixir'' that he receives in the *Kao-tao chuan* is ultimately symbolic. It might foretoken his ultimate reward, but the fact that Ho's response is to enter the priesthood suggests that he actually has further steps to take. The implication seems to be that he may have succeeded illustriously in his status as a layman, but the true fulfillment of his spiritual path was to be found only in the clerical life. Hence, the encounter with the T'ung-ho elder in the *Kao-tao chuan* represents not a final culmination, but rather a transition, a passing from a more limited, secular life to a more fulfilling, clerical life.

The message of the parallel account in the Chia-ting text is of quite a different nature. In fact, it could be argued that the Chia-ting version is not really ''Taoist'' at all. The *Kao-tao chuan* version presents Ho as a man, as someone whose spiritual development was grounded in his conformance to specific moral ideals, ideals that

had been enshrined in the institutional procedures of the Taoist religious establishment. In the Chia-ting text, on the other hand, the institutional ideals of Taoism are virtually ignored.

In fact, the ideals revealed in the Chia-ting text are not in strict accordance with those that tend to characterize T'ang Taoism. Here, one notes first of all the assertion that Ho had been "thoroughly learned in Huang-Lao," a phrase that is often construed as a synonym for "Taoism." But it should be noted that in biographies of T'ang Taoists one very rarely encounters the term "Huang-Lao," and it certainly is no formal indication of anyone's involvement with organized Taoism. Moreover, the text presents Ho as a purveyor of pharmaceuticals. One grants that certain Taoist leaders, particularly in pre-T'ang times, had sought to achieve spiritual perfection through ingesting supernal essences. But in the formal Taoist context, true salvific power resided not in any elixir itself, but rather in the personal process that led to its creation—a process that required many years of tireless, concentrated effort.[16] In the true Taoist worldview, "immortality" is not achieved through some simple expedient like swallowing a magic potion: there are no shortcuts, and no one can hand someone else "immortality" in a bottle. Rather, the opportunity to transcend the limitations of mortality awaits the rare individual who is willing to forego selfish desires and ambitions in order to undertake a rigorous personal discipline, a discipline that is at once moral and spiritual (as evinced in the *Kao-tao chuan* B account). Indeed, from the Taoist perspective, a desire to become a *hsien* could easily become a distraction from true spiritual growth (just as, from a Mahayana Buddhist perspective, a longing for Buddhahood might hinder one's achievement of enlightenment). Hence it was felt that Taoist aspirants could only succeed in the spiritual life with the expert guidance of wise and experienced superiors (as shown in the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* story).

It should be noted that in the Chia-ting text there is no suggestion that Ho underwent such spiritual discipline. The mysterious drugs that Ho supposedly possessed are not associated with the moral or spiritual development of a religious aspirant. Instead, Ho appears in the Chia-ting text as a figure who is barely human at all, at least in the ordinary sense. He is no longer a government official

on the path to transcendence, but rather an evocation of a romantic ideal, an image of a mysterious being to whom life and death themselves seem to be but of little significance. In this account, Ho's reported encounter with the T'ung-ho Elder has little clear meaning. We have already been informed that Ho has "ascended to immortality." So what is the purpose here of T'ung-ho's pronouncement? It seems to have no real bearing on Ho's life, as it had in the *Kao-tao chuan*. The text also omits the preamble, which had stressed the necessity for gradual and orderly progress on the spiritual path. So what remains is a philosophical point of no direct relevance to the issue of Ho's progress along the path.

In this context, Ho's life ceases to have any moral significance. In a sense, Ho ceases to be human here at all: he is someone at whom the reader can marvel, but hardly someone whom he can truly admire or emulate. In a literary sense, at least, Ho has here become a transcendent being. He lives and acts in a sphere beyond the strivings of living people; he dallies among us without treading—or revealing—a real path. Consequently, Ho may be "an immortal" here, but he is no longer any sort of saint: he does not embody any visible virtue, and his activities do not provide any real religious insights. The "Director Ho" of the Chia-ting text is not only alien to the Ho Chih-chang of history: he is alien even to the character met in the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*, a real human being who learns and grows and evolves to a higher state of awareness.

Taoist Exaltation: Moral and Spiritual Elevation

In the *Chia-ting Ch'ih-ch'eng chih*, we can see Ho Chih-chang as a deathless "immortal," but we can no longer see him as a Taoist: a person who does not acknowledge the ideal of elevating one's spiritual awareness does not embody the fundamental values of the Taoist tradition. It is in this respect that one can see the relationship of Taoist religious values to the values embodied in classical texts like *Lao-tzu* and *Chuang-tzu*. In each case, there is, above all, a concept that the only meaningful human achievement is a transformation of consciousness, an elevation of our awareness of the nature of reality and of the significance of our own being. And for all the divergences in thought and practice in different segments of the

Taoist tradition, this fundamental concern with the elevation or transformation of one's spiritual reality sets the Taoist apart from the non-Taoist. To the non-Taoist, the idea of "immortality" may have implied no more than escaping death, and the pursuit of immortality may have constituted the search for a method that would obviate the need to undergo the death-event. But to the Taoist, the ultimate goal was always to achieve assimilation to the higher dimensions of reality, and such assimilation required a process of purification and growth, a process that was at once cognitive, moral, and spiritual.

In the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*, Ho Chih-chang is presented as a character who learns those facts for the first time. In the *Kao-tao chuan*, he is presented as someone who has shown his full recognition of them, and is ready to begin reaping the rewards of his dedication. In the *Chia-ting Ch'ih-ch'eng chih*, however, we completely lose sight of such ideals. Ho is explicitly elevated to the ranks of the immortals, but that exaltation is devoid of any religious significance: it results from a writer's *ipse dixit*, not from any true spiritual achievement on the part of the subject. Ho is no longer a model, but only a metaphor: he appears as an image of someone at a "higher" stage of being, but he has also become removed from our world. A person who wishes to become like him is actually wishing to renounce his humanity, not to fulfill it. Consequently, from an authentic Taoist perspective, what Ho represents there is not real immortality at all.

Conclusion

It must be acknowledged that Ho Chih-chang was by no means a pivotal figure in Chinese religious history. In fact, as noted at the outset, relatively few of his biographers ever suggest that Ho's life possessed religious significance at all. But the fact remains that the composers of certain late texts appropriated the figure of Ho Chih-chang in order to present a moral lesson, and someone eventually embellished one such tale to represent him as "an immortal."

These facts raise an obvious question: Why did certain writers perceive a T'ang imperial librarian to be an apposite figure to be adduced in relation to their moral and religious ideals? The answer to that question would seem to lie in the historical and cultural con-

text of medieval China. Throughout much of Chinese history, the pursuit of immortality seems to have been looked upon askance by much of the elite—the educated, male "Confucians" who tended to dominate both the cultural and the political spheres. Yet, certain individuals labored to convince them that the pursuit of immortality was actually a valid and respectable path to individual self-perfection.

Not all such proponents of the pursuits of immortality were "Taoist" in any strict sense, as can be seen from the case of Ko Hung (283-343), the author of the well-known *Pao-p'u tzu.*[17] Ko had been educated in the Confucian classics, and defended Confucian social and political values. But he also had a profound interest in *nei-hsüeh* ("the study of internal realities"), particularly in the subject of alchemy. Ko is often cited as an important "Taoist" writer, but he was actually a maverick who was oblivious to the social and liturgical format of the Taoist religion of his day (the "Celestial Master" organization, the leadership of which was in the process of immigrating to south China). Ko's ideal was a fully cultivated gentleman, someone versed both in classical (Confucian) learning and in the sublime processes of personal refinement, processes that—in his mind, at least—could elevate a person to immortality. In the "Inner Sections" of his *Pao-p'u-tzu*, Ko attempts to demonstrate that the search for immortality through alchemy was not only feasible in itself, but actually the most proper and meaningful pursuit for a gentleman of perception and refinement.

Nonetheless, despite the efforts of people like Ko, the majority of the elite of his day remained unpersuaded or uninterested. And in later centuries "immortality" was often looked upon with condescension, as a goal of people whose moral or social standing was in some sense open to question. Consequently, proponents of the pursuit of immortality sometimes attempted to identify distinguished historical figures whom they could adduce as having attained such immortality. A writer who could persuade his readers that an illustrious statesman like Ho Chih-chang had sought and achieved immortality might be able to persuade them that immortality was indeed a valid and respectable ideal.

The figure of Ho Chih-chang was not one that readily lent itself to hagiographical endeavors. But in traditional China, the

hagiographical process was multi-faceted, and certain hagiographers found that even someone like the T'ang Imperial Librarian could be transformed into a figure that advanced their religious ideals. Attention to such hagiographical devices can shed significant light upon the subtlety and diversity of Chinese concepts of "immortality," and upon the processes by which historical figures could be elevated to the status of a *hsien*.

Bradley University   RUSSELL KIRKLAND
Department of Religious Studies
1501 West Bradley Ave
Peoria, Illinois 61625, USA

[1] The term *hsien* is difficult to translate. "Immortal" is the term generally used, though it is not entirely satisfactory, for two reasons. First, to Western readers it may connote the "immortals" of classical antiquity, which do not really correspond closely to the Chinese *hsien*. Secondly, I would argue that invulnerability to death is not necessarily foremost among the fundamental characteristics of the *hsien*. Some scholars translate *hsien* as "transcendent," while others leave it untranslated entirely. For the purposes of the present study, I shall leave aside the issue of the most accurate translation of the term, and follow the conventional usage.

[2] Henri Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, translated by Frank A. Kierman, Jr. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), p. 416.

[3] See for example Russell Kirkland, "The Roots of Altruism in the Taoist Tradition," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 54 (1986), 59-77.

[4] See Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, p. 430.

[5] Holmes Welch, *Taoism: The Parting of the Way*, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), pp. 89-90.

[6] For the intimate involvement of Taoist leaders with the elite in T'ang China, see especially Kirkland, "The Last Taoist Grand Master at the T'ang Imperial Court: Li Han-Kuang and T'ang Hsüan-tsung," *T'ang Studies* 4 (1986), 43-67; and my forthcoming study, *Taoist and Dynast: The Political Dimensions of Taoism in T'ang China*.

[7] "From Imperial Tutor to Taoist Priest: Ho Chih-chang at the T'ang Court," *Journal of Asian History* 23 (1989), 101-133.

[8] The *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* is a massive collection and has never been fully translated. An outline of its contents is available in Edward H. Schafer, "The Table of Contents of the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 2 (1980), 258-63. See also his entry on the work in Yves Hervouet, ed., *A Sung Bibliography* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978), pp. 341-42.

[9] *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* (Peking, 1959), 42.263.

[10] This biographical practice is discussed in my article, "Tales of Thaumaturgy: T'ang Accounts of the Wonder-Worker Yeh Fa-Shan," *Monumenta Serica*, in press.

¹¹ For more on both texts, see Kirkland, "Taoists of the High T'ang: An Inquiry into the Perceived Significance of Eminent Taoists in Medieval Chinese Society" (dissertation, Indiana University, 1986), pp. 211-12. On the *San-tung ch'ün-hsien lu* [HY 1238], see further Judith Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature: Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries* (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1987), p. 59.

¹² The text of this biography appears in the *Kao-tao chuan*, in Yen I-p'ing, *Tao-chiao yen-chiu tzu-liao* (Taipei, 1974), 2.52.

¹³ See, e.g., Michel Strickmann, "Dreamwork of Psycho-Sinologists: Doctors, Taoists, Monks," in Carolyn T. Brown, ed., *Psycho-Sinology: The Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Asia Program, 1988), 25-46.

¹⁴ The *Chia-ting Ch'ih-ch'eng chih* was compiled by Ch'en Ch'i-ching (ca. 1180-1236) between 1208 and 1225. Cf. the entry by Etienne Balazs in *A Sung Bibliography*, p. 147. I utilize the edition preserved in the *T'ai-chou tsung-shu*, first collection. The text of the biography of Ho appears at *Chia-ting Ch'ih-ch'eng chih* 35.10a.

¹⁵ No text of this name appears in the Sung catalogs, or in the present *Tao-tsang*. There is no way to be certain whether it ever existed or not.

¹⁶ Cf. Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, pp. 271-72, 278-79; Michel Strickmann, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," in Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel, ed., *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 123-192.

¹⁷ On Ko Hung, see, e.g., T.H. Barrett, "Ko Hung," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, VIII, 359-60. A problematic translation of the "Inner Sections" of the *Pao-p'u-tzu* appears in James R. Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, Religion in the China of A.D. 320* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1966).

WHEN BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVES DISAGREE: THE DEATH OF KṚṢṆA CAITANYA

TONY K. STEWART

Summary

   The conflicting death narratives of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya (1486-1533), who was the inspiration for the Vaiṣṇava movement of Bengal, provide insights into the way members of a believing community reveal historical information about themselves and the way that they think, rather than about their ostensible subject. According to the mainstrean theologians of this group, it is improper to speak of Caitanya's death because he is Kṛṣṇa, *svayaṃ bhagavān*, and as such he only descends to earth and ascends back to heaven. Four of the hagiographers underscore this by refusing to speak of the event, making clear that it carries no soteriological significance. Fourteen other authors, however, provide four alternatives: Caitanya disappears into the temple of Jagannātha, into the temple of Gopīnātha, or into the waters of the sea, or he dies from a foot infection. In spite of the obvious differences, the surface narratives follow a distinct pattern of action: devotional action, transition or separation in the locale of an *axis mundi*, and reintegration to heaven. The pattern, in turn, parallels basic Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava conceptions of ontology, the steps of devotional *sādhana*, and the progression of devotional consciousness, which suggests that the tripartite structure is more than a coincidence, that it is endemic to their conceptual worlds. Because all of these explicit narratives curtail Caitanya's divinity by depicting his death, they are theologically heterodox, yet the underlying pattern demonstrates that their vision is conditioned by conceptualizations consistent with orthodox thought.

   In the hermeneutics of sacred biography, when scholars resort to different standards of interpretation in order to accommodate, explain away, or simply dismiss disagreement in the narratives, they are more than anything guilty of mistaking the nature of their sources. When sacred biographies agree about certain events in the life of their subject, scholars and believers alike generally accept the historical accuracy of such accounts on the assumption, questionable though it is, that agreement is tantamount to historical veracity; yet when the narratives disagree, many historians of religions seem to change their own hermeneutic rules in a process that often invalidates their conclusions. To ask questions of "historical truth" regarding the subject of a sacred biography or hagiography is to ignore the most salient feature of such a composi-

tion: religious belief. Hagiography or sacred biography is religiously motivated discourse, not the history of a religious subject, although something of that history may well lurk in the narratives. The hagiographer or biographer, as interpreter of an exemplary religious life, cannot but filter that life through the lens of belief, and the more sophisticated and systematic the statements of belief by the author, the more stylized or mythologized become the "facts" of the life in question. When the narratives tend to agree in their retelling of an episode in the life of a religious subject, we do not necessarily have any greater historical probability regarding the facts of the individual's life than when they do not, unless they can be verified by independent sources that are not written from the standpoint of the religiously committed. What the narratives do when they uniformly agree is to document the historical beliefs aimed at the biographical subject, beliefs which are held by the author and perhaps the community that author represents; the history is far more one of the authors, than of the subject.[1]

Disagreement between the narratives, however, can be understood in two different ways, both of which reveal underlying assumptions and attitudes on the part of the author or the community. The point of disagreement may be a highly charged theological issue, with the differences in interpretation overtly obvious to the point that we can, with some level of assurance, pinpoint the tensions that seem inevitably to grow among communities of believers. Or, and this is the side which is generally ignored, the bone of contention may be theologically insignificant and, to the authors, unworthy of systematic treatment or contest. I propose that the inconsistency regarding relatively minor issues can open a window onto the ways that the authors, and perhaps their immediate communities, think about the world they have constructed, an insight that is just as, if not more, subtle, compelling, and revealing than the more often emotionally-charged theological struggles, which can become political watersheds in the believing community. The argument for this position is straightforward, but needs to be made explicit: we can generalize that the positions which are taken by authors when they disagree about apparently minor issues are not going to be as well considered and tightly argued as major theologically or ritually motivated conflicts. The

positions—they are not always arguments—will tend to be tempered by general trends in thinking and structured by generally unquestioned presuppositions about the world, much as Foucault and other theorists have argued regarding the limiting nature of discourse and the influence of the period episteme. These apparently insignificant differences are, then, just as revealing as their more well-publicized counterparts. To illustrate just how telling such disagreement can be, I shall examine the death stories of the charismatic Bengali Hindu, Kṛṣṇa Caitanya (1486-1533), whose sixteenth century biographers submitted no fewer than five accounts, often radically different, of his worldly demise.

The Mainstream Position: A Death That is Not Death

There are no fewer than thirteen extant biographies of the charismatic Vaiṣṇava leader, Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, in Bengali, Sanskrit, and Oriya, and a host of ancillary works containing biographical materials, that are datable to the century following his death in 1533. Regarding this death, significantly the two most popular and authoritative Bengali biographies—Vṛndāvana Dāsa's *Caitanya bhāgavata* and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's *Caitanya caritāmṛta*—and the two earliest Sanskrit biographies—Murāri Gupta's *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta* and Kavikarṇapūra's *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta mahākāvya*—were essentially silent on the subject. Theologically, death could not be an issue, for Caitanya was *svayaṃ bhagavān*, the supreme lord Kṛṣṇa himself, and as such he simply descended (*ava + √tṛ <avatāra*) to earth in the year 1486 and ascended to heaven forty-seven years later.

Murāri Gupta, the first biographer and elder intimate devotee of Caitanya, writing in the year of his master's death, remarks only on the coming and going of his lord. In *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta* 1.2.11-14 he states:[2]

> 11. Prabhu [Caitanya], Unborn source of the World, was born as his [Viśvarūpa's] younger brother, just as Upendra, the son of Aditi by Kaśyapa, was the younger brother of Indra. 12. Personally making the triple-world intent upon Hari-*saṃkīrtana*, he dwelled in the preeminent place designated Puruṣottama-kṣetra [Puri]. 13. He performed devotion (*bhakti*) to Hari and imparted instruction in the same

to others. He tasted the sweetness of Śrī Vṛndāvana and caused others to taste it too. 14. After saving the whole world, he was propitiated by the inhabitants of Vaikuṇṭha heaven and, pleased, he journeyed to his own innate resplendent abode.

The message is unambiguous: Kṛṣṇa came to earth as Caitanya Prabhu and, after leading the world to salvation, returned to heaven. There is no talk of death; Caitanya has only changed the venue of his eternal activities.

Paramānanda Sena, who was given the name Kavikarṇapūra, "Ear Ornament of Poets," by Caitanya himself and who appears to be the only other biographer to have known Caitanya personally, follows the lead of his senior Murāri. In the conclusion to his Sanskrit *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta mahākāvya* (20.39-47),[3] with a title similar to Murāri's work and which was composed shortly thereafter, in 1542, Kavikarṇapūra summarizes Caitanya's sojourn on earth:

> 39. Gauracandra [Caitanya] gathered together his own devotees from different regions and nurtured an intense mutual love among them. He experienced much pleasure with the aforementioned devotees in the lands of Gauḍa and Utkala [Orissa]. When this lord, Prabhu, returned to his own innate realm, the earth was plunged into the ocean of the fire of separation. 40. For twenty-four years Mahāprabhu revealed his love (*prema*) and was suitably uncontrolled. Although he undertook ascetic vows near Navadvīpa, he passed three years wandering hither and yon, finally returning to Kṣetra [Puri]. He then spent twenty years participating in religious festivals. 41. In this fashion, for forty-seven years Śrī Gaurāṅga-deva [Caitanya] carried out a succession of dramatic activities as he played in the earthly realm. Afterwards he journeyed back to his own innate abode.[4]

This basic statement is echoed by Vṛndāvana Dāsa in the oldest extant Bengali biography of Caitanya, the *Caitanya bhāgavata* 1.2.282 (ca. late 1540s): The activities (*līlās*) of Caitanya never end, the Veda speaks only of their appearance (*āvirbhāva*) and disappearance (*tirobhāva*) from human view.[5] Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, writing the final word in the hagiographical tradition (ca. 1600-1615), concurs in *Caitanya caritāmṛta* 2.6.149.[6] Elsewhere he summarizes this journey, but, as one might expect given his theological

erudition and inclination to systematics, he stylizes the dates so that
they are more symmetrical (1.13.7-12):

> 7. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya descended at Navadvīpa, and for forty-eight
> years his sport was apparent. 8. 1407 of the Śaka era witnessed his
> birth, and in 1455 he disappeared. 9. For twenty-four years Prabhu
> lived as a householder, always praising Kṛṣṇa. 10. At the end of
> twenty-four years he took *saṃnyāsa*, and for twenty-four years he lived
> at Nīlācala [Puri]. 11. Of this, six years [were spent] in wandering,
> sometimes in the south, sometimes in Gauḍa [Bengal], sometimes to
> Vṛndāvana. 12. For eighteen years he remained at Nīlācala, and
> caused all to float in the nectar of name and love (*prema*) of Kṛṣṇa.

There is no reason to speak of a death that did not occur.

In further confirmation of the descent and ascent explicitly
articulated by Vṛndāvana Dāsa, Kṛṣṇadāsa reports an enigmatic
exchange between Caitanya and his chief disciple Advaitācārya that
underscores the voluntary nature of Caitanya's departure from the
worldly realm (*CC* 3.19.14-28). Advaita, speaking in riddles, sends
a message that suggests that Caitanya's work is finished. Caitanya,
in response to his devotees' puzzled inquiries about this message,
explains that Advaita is a great ritualist (*pūjaka*), and that it was he
who invoked the deity and that he is now dismissing that deity.
Although Kṛṣṇadāsa himself claims ignorance of the meaning of
this statement, it seems rather clearly to refer to Advaita's well-
attested role as the efficient cause of the *avatāra*, for he awakened
Kṛṣṇa from his slumber on the cosmic ocean by his worship (*pūjā*)
and by his loud cries (*huṃkāra*) for help in this degraded Kali Age,
and from that invocation Kṛṣṇa descended to earth as Caitanya (*CC*
1.3.72, 76-91; 1.4.225; 1.6.30-31; 1.13.61-69; 3.3.210-213). Now,
as the controller of a life-long *pūjā* that was Caitanya's life, and
recognizing that Caitanya has accomplished his mission to spread
prema-bhakti through *kīrtana*, Advaita admonishes him to return to
heaven. The implied conscious manipulation of this departure is a
theme that will be echoed in other biographies, albeit under dif-
ferent circumstances.

Clearly all four of these biographies—and the *Caitanya bhāgavata*
and *Caitanya caritāmṛta* are revered today as the most influential and
orthodox within the tradition—find the disappearance of Caitanya

to be theologically insignificant; it has no soteriological value, as the deaths of major religious figures often have, and it appears to serve little or no didactic purpose.[7] In fact, to speak of death is to misunderstand the nature of Caitanya as *bhagavān*, the supreme lord. *Bhagavān* has no physical body (*māyā*), rather his is pure, unadulterated *cit* or consciousness (or on occasion his being is characterized as *sat* [being], *cit* [consciousness], and *ānanda* [bliss]).[8] By comparison, the nature of Kṛṣṇa as Caitanya can be compared to the Manichean concept of docetism.

In spite of this position of avowed docetism, other biographers within the tradition did feel the need to explain to their devotional audiences how Caitanya disappeared. In so doing, of course, they flirt with deviation from the standard, orthodox position as it has emerged in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava world.[9] Notably, however, none of them uses any term that could technically be construed as referring to Caitanya's mortality (Skt. √*mṛ*); they do use an assortment of euphemisms, which sidestep the direct assertion of his death, but in so doing they imply his physical death or come dangerously close. To write as these authors do is to promote an attenuated heterodoxy or at least a variance from the accepted theological norms, albeit seldom in more than a limited way. These alternative narratives offer four different versions of Caitanya's death and many more minor variations between them. Two of the stories have strong cultural and sectarian biases: Caitanya disappears in the confines of the Jagannātha temple or in the Gopīnātha temple. In a story with strong mythic overtones, he is injured in the foot and ushered off to heaven. And in another, somewhat less explicit, but popular story that shows psychoanalytic undercurrents, he slips into the ocean never to return. While these narratives differ in most respects, they do seem to share certain important features—for instance, with only one minor exception, they are uniform in that when Caitanya disappears, he leaves behind no physical body. With no physical body, there is no burial or cremation, nor is there any death celebration.[10] What mourning there is is interpreted through the theologically prominent conception of *viraha*, the searing agony of separation's fire suffered in the most heated of loves, an attitude clearly based on the model of Kṛṣṇa's departure for Mathurā where he left Rādhā and the other cowherd girls in the

idyll of Vṛndāvana. The *viraha* is all the more poingant in this case
because of its finality and its amplification by repeating the mythic
paradigm of the *Bhāgavata purāṇa*. Still, the basic stories diverge
significantly from the norm and from each other, and from these
differences we can glimpse something of the way these sixteenth
century authors think.

Caitanya Disappears into the Jagannātha Temple

Locana Dāsa, writing his *Caitanya maṅgala* in the 1570s, tells of
Caitanya's disappearance into the temple of Jagannātha; the text
is one of the most detailed of any of the accounts of Caitanya's pass-
ing (4.15.15-39).[11] Jagannātha is the lord of Puri, Dāru Brahma,
identical to Kṛṣṇa whose temple is a great pilgrimage center for
Vaiṣṇavas in northeast India. It was in the presence of Jagannātha
that Caitanya passed his last eighteen years essentially uninter-
rupted. Given his devotion to Jagannātha and the strong identifica-
tions made between them by the various authors, Locana Dāsa
writes:

> 15. One time when Mahāprabhu [Caitanya] was in the home of
> Kāśī Miśra, he retold the stories of Vṛndāvana, and his heart ached.
> 16. Sighing deeply, Mahāprabhu remarked, "I have never witnessed
> such a display [of devotion] among devotees."
> 17. Reverently Mahāprabhu stood up in order to go visit Jagan-
> nātha. Proceeding deliberately, he worked his way through the main
> gate. 18. A number of intimate followers accompanied him in like
> fashion, quickly passing inside the temple compound. 19. They
> looked but could not see Prabhu, while Prabhu, inside that com-
> pound, pondered his own course of action. 20. Abruptly he slammed
> shut the entryway door, and deranged, ran quickly into the sanc-
> tuary. 21. During the course of the seventh lunar day of the month
> of Āṣāḍha [June-July] it is reported that Prabhu gave up his life
> (*niḥsvāsa*).
> 22. The ages are Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali. In the Kali
> Age, chanting of the name (*saṃkīrtana*) is established as the best wor-
> ship. 23. "Bestow your mercy, Jagannātha, Protector of the Fallen!
> The Kali Age is upon us, grant me your shelter!" 24. Because of this
> cry [of Caitanya's], He who is the Lord of the Three Worlds stretched
> out his arms and embraced [Caitanya] to his heart. 25. On Sunday

during the time of the third watch, Prabhu merged (*līna*) himself in Jagannātha.

26. There was a *brahman* priest present in the *guñjā-bārī* when Caitanya came in, and this priest wondered aloud what was going on. 27. The devotees spied the *brahman* and cried out, "Listen, O priest! Open the door! We want to see Prabhu!" 28. In response to the distress of the devotees, the *brahman* attendant consoled them, "Prabhu disappeared within the inner sanctum. 29. Right before my eyes Gaura united with the Lord. All of you, listen, for I am certain of what I say."

30. Hearing this announcement, the devotees wailed loudly, "Never again will we behold the beams of Prabhu's moon-face!" 31. Everyone—Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and Mukunda Datta, Gaurīdāsa, Vāsudatta, and Śrī Govinda, 32. Kāśī Miśra, Sanātana and Haridāsa—with many gut-wrenching sighs, wept bitterly and loudly. 33. When King Pratāparudra heard the news he fell insensate in the presence of his family. 34. Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, with his son, cried out, "Prabhu, Prabhu, hear me, Gaura Rāya!"

35. The devotees wailed in their misery, but how can I, a worthless person, write of all this? 36. Prabhu's virtues are famed far and wide. Not having him now in my sight, I flounder in the dark. Take heed, listen one and all! Serve Gaurāṅga's feet day and night, my brothers. 38. May everyone hear of the qualities of Gaura and become stain-free. By this means one destroys the disease of existence. 39. Grief-stricken Locana laments; the last chapter of the *kīrtana* of Prabhu comes to an end.

The expression in v. 21 for "gave up his life" is *niḥsvāsa*, literally to be "without breath" or to "quit breathing." This, of course, implies a physical body, or it might be construed simply to refer to the absence of the life force, *prāṇa*, which implies the same. Locana Dāsa significantly adds in the following verses: Caitanya merges (*līna*) with Jagannātha, and thereby established a clear relationship of identity between the two. But then Caitanya calls out for Jagan-nātha to rescue him (vv. 23-25) in a way that seems to position Caitanya as a mere devotee of or at most only a portion (*aṃśa* or *avatāra*) of Jagannātha, which suggests an asymmetry of relation that grossly violates the generally accepted theology regarding Caitanya's constitution. Although Caitanya is often held up as the model devotee—and this would be an appropriate relation—the

episode, perhaps inadvertently, reduces Caitanya's importance by mitigating his ontological status as Kṛṣṇa. By the prevailing standards of the Gosvāmin theologians in the community, this episode fails to maintain Caitanya's precise and generally accepted identity as *svayaṃ bhagavān*.

This basic story is likewise found in the *Advaita prakāśa* of Īśāna Nāgara.[12] The authenticity of this biography as a sixteenth century work has been questioned, for it appears from several anachronisms to be a much later attempt to elevate the status of the subject of the work, Advaitācārya, Caitanya's chief disciple in Nadīyā. The text claims to be composed as early as 1569, but a later date, perhaps as much as a century, might be more correct. Īśāna Nāgara's brief statement (*Advaita prakāśa* 21.63-67) is very much in line with Locana Dāsa's *Caitanya mangala*.

> 63. One day after visiting Jagannātha, Gaura [Caitanya] entered the holy temple, crying out, "O Lord!" 64. Just as he entered, the door closed of itself. A terrible apprehension was born in the hearts of the devotees. 65. A short while later the door opened up. The group inferred that Gaurāṅga had passed away (*aprakaṭa*). 66. Even though none of the devotees was present there when Caitanya passed away (*aprakaṭa*), the perfected ones among Gaura's entourage grieved bitterly. 67. Their grief, fierce and flaming, suffused with tremendous energy (*tejas*), consumed the bodies, minds, and hearts of all living beings.

The term *aprakaṭa*, "unmanifest," is semantically congruous with Locana Dāsa's usage of *līna*, "merge." It is perhaps significant that Īśāna mentions that no one was present when Caitanya withdrew his manifest form, so there were apparently no eye-witnesses—a position generally seconded by most of the authors who chose to write of his death.

Three Oriya Vaiṣṇavas, all members of the Pañca-sakhā community centered in Puri around Jagannātha, wrote of Caitanya's death in a similar vein. Acyutānanda Dāsa in the *Śūnya-saṃhitā* records the basic version that is found in other Oriya texts, such as Divākara Dāsa's *Jagannātha caritāmṛta*, and the much later *Caitanya bhāgavata* of Īśvara Dāsa.[13] In all of these texts, Caitanya merges with Jagannātha, but with the addition of the reigning king, Gajapati Pratāparudra, as witness. Of obvious overriding

theological concern is the relationship of Caitanya to Jagannātha. Jagannātha is the most important temple-based deity in northeast India, especially during the sixteenth century, because the entire region, save the Gajapati dynasty's territory of Orissa, which includes Jagannātha-kṣetra (Puri), had succumbed to Muslim domination.[14] Jagannātha represents the last bastion of a Hindu-controlled world. Because Caitanya is Krṣṇa, he is Jagannātha, and he is routinely referred to—in Bengali and Oriya works—as the ''mobile'' (*sacala*) Jagannātha in contrast to the wooden image in the temple which is ''immobile'' (*acala*). Entering the temple and disappearing is only what many devotees would expect and could undoubtedly accept. This ending for Caitanya's life is on the surface theologically acceptable, for Jagannātha in his temple is the premier *axis mundi* of Northeast India, but perhaps more importantly, this solution is politically expedient. The presence of Pratāparudra, the Gajapati king, reaffirms his divine kingship and sanctions his position as rightful leader, himself another important *axis mundi*. But the politics of these popular narratives collides directly with the sophisticated theology of the mainstream tradition.

The dramatic sequence in each of these cases has a discernible pattern. In the company of devotees and often the king, Caitanya engages in worship which results in a trip to a temple housing Jagannātha—either the main temple or the *guñja-bārī*. Caitanya, experiencing the rapture of devotion, slips inside the temple and becomes separated from his devotees, never to return—the Bengali version of Locana Dāsa and Īśāna Nāgara—or he merges with Jagannātha in the presence of the Gajapati king—the Oriya versions of Divākara Dāsa, Acyutānanda, and Īśvara Dāsa.

Taken collectively, these five texts give the most uniform, explicit, and extensive accounts of Caitanya's disappearance. Yet there are two additional stories which offer an interesting variant of the Jagannātha narrative and which lead us to the next prominent cycle. The first is Govindadāsa Bābājī's Oriya *Caitanya cakaḍā*, a book which has only recently been recovered and circulated, and which contains a fairly detailed account of Caitanya's disappearance.[15] According to Govindadāsa Bābājī, Caitanya, on his last day, had been swept up in the ecstasy of *kīrtana* to the point of total physical exhaustion; he was carried in this state to the Gopīnātha

temple by his devotees, several of whom had inferred that he was about to withdraw, lit., "cover over" (*saṃvaraṇa*), his worldly activities (*līlā*). Later he stood at the Garuḍa pillar for the evening *ārati* of Jagannātha, apparently having regained his composure and not needing the immediate aid of his followers, who had let him be. At an auspicious moment a garland fell from the neck of Jagannātha, a sign, and in a sudden, blinding flash of light brighter than a crore of the sun's rays, Caitanya disappeared. "According to his own wish, his body became unmanifest. He merged (*līna*) into the body of Jagannātha" (p. 60). His devotees could not find him anywhere, even though they looked in the Jagannātha temple compound, the Indradyumna Lake, the Gopīnātha temple, the various forests and groves around Puri, and a host of other of his favorite spots. It was Rāmānanda Rāya who finally determined exactly what had happened. In a reversal of the sequence, Vaiṣṇava Dāsa writes in his *Śrī caitanya gaurāṅga cakaḍā* that Caitanya fell insensate at the Garuḍa pillar and was subsequently taken to the Ṭoṭā Gopīnātha by his devotees, where he disappeared.[16]

That a number of authors would interpret Caitanya's death through his identity with Jagannātha would surprise no one; but it must be remembered that in spite of the devotees' understanding of Jagannātha as Kṛṣṇa, the form is, as the name makes clear, an image of martial and universal sovereignty and one that is connected with the institution of divine kingship, the Gajapati dynasty. Jagannātha represents Kṛṣṇa's *aiśvarya*, sovereignty and lordship. The Gopīnātha image, however, is devoid of such associations, and Caitanya's message, as most generally understood within the community, was focused on the love of Gopīnātha—"Lord of the Gopīs"—for the cowherd girls. This is Kṛṣṇa's image of *mādhurya*, loving sweetness, which is deemed the most desirable and indeed the ultimate form of Kṛṣṇa by the mainstream theologians, especially the Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. It was possibly to emphasize both of these aspects of his divine nature that Govindadāsa Bābājī and Vaiṣṇava Dāsa sought to connect the two; but several authors, either reporting what they heard from others or choosing to emphasize his *mādhurya* nature, write of Caitanya's demise in the temple of Gopīnātha without explicit connection to Jagannātha.

Caitanya Disappears in the Temple of Gopīnātha

Possibly the earliest account of Caitanya's death occurs in a lyric by Vāsudeva Ghoṣa, a Nadīyā songwriter. The account merits serious historical consideration, for Vāsudeva was a long-time companion of Caitanya, and in his later years personally attended the leading guru, Nityānanda, at the express request of Caitanya himself. Vāsudeva was not in Puri, however, when Caitanya died. But it is not with history that Vāsudeva Ghoṣa is concerned, as demonstrated in his poem, which is in the style of *Nadīyā-nāgarī-bhāva*, wherein the author assumes the attitude of a female lover or would-be lover of Caitanya (who is Kṛṣṇa).

> Tears gush from my eyes unchecked,
> Without Gaura there's no end to my heart's ache.
> He is wealth.
> > He is life.
> > > He is all things.
> Without Gaura everything causes me grief.
> Gaura is the creamy essence
> of a heaven submerged in praise.
> If there one's heart fails to dwell
> His body, a burden, drags him down.
> What will I do?
> > Where will I go?
> > > Words fail me—
> I've lost my Gauracānda in Gopīnātha's house.
>
> *Vāsudeva Ghoṣa suffers in grief,*
> *"My heart runs away in passion for Gaura."*[17]

We recognize here the agony of parted lovers, indeed *vipralambha*—love in separation—is the ideal form in the *bhakti-rasa* that shaped Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava devotional life. This type of separation is only possible when Caitanya is understood to be the object of the devotee's erotic love; it is only suitable for his *mādhurya* nature. It would be theologically confused and devotionally imprudent to approach Jagannātha, who is the sovereign lord of the cosmos, in this fashion. Details of Caitanya's demise, however, are completely lacking, for the focus is on the emotional content of the moment as experienced by the poet. So too are the details in the other accounts of his disappearance into the Gopīnātha house.

Writing a generation later, Narahari Cakravartī records in his *Bhaktiratnākara* (8.354-60)[18] the visit of his guru, Narottama Dāsa, to the pilgrimage center of Puri, and while there Narottama receives information regarding the passing of Caitanya within the Gopīnātha compound. Two pieces of information are forthcoming in this narrative. First, the priest indicates that Caitanya had first slipped away from everyone to enter the temple (v. 357), much as had been recorded in the stories that attribute his death to disappearance in the Jagannātha temple. Second, the priest showed Narottama the very place where Caitanya fell insensate at his death (v. 359), much as the two Oriya works place him at the Garuḍa pillar. An Oriya writer, Sadānanda Kavisūrya Brahma, seconds this position in his *Prema taraṅgiṇī*.[19] This inclination to point out the specific place where Caitanya fell suggests that, while the official biographies may have ignored Caitanya's death in favor of the theologically correct position that it was meaningless to talk of it, the devotees in the immediate community and in the following generations clearly felt in need of an explanation. What emerges as a common theme, in spite of the brevity of these accounts, is that Caitanya eludes the company of his devotees as he prepared to die, and does so by entering into the abode of Gopīnātha: as a prelude to death or departure, physical separation occurs in a spot sacred to the Vaiṣṇavas. The time of this death for virtually every writer, including the orthodox who only talk of his departure, is the general time of the Jagannātha Car Festival, the most important period of sacred time in the annual ritual cycle for the Vaiṣṇavas of Northeast India, especially Puri. And it is the procession of the Jagannātha Car Festival that sets the scene for the most controversial of the death stories.

Caitanya Suffers an Injured Foot

For many devotees, the most problematic of the death narratives is that of Jayānanda Miśra, who wrote sometime during the 1550s. In his *Caitanya maṅgala* (*uttara khaṇḍa* 119-55),[20] Jayānanda records that Caitanya struck his foot on a brick, and after the ensuing infection ran its course, he returned to Vaikuṇṭha heaven riding in the chariot pulled by Garuḍa, the winged mount of Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu.

119. Crossing the Mahānadī River, [Caitanya] travelled to Nīlācala [Puri]. He lived in Nīlācala for twenty-eight years.[21] 120. Everyone was intent on *dharma* and the earth was prosperous. A flood of love stretched up to the edge of the Himalayas. 121. In this ocean of love, Nityānanda was the helmsman. The ship loaded with the sins of the Kali Age sank in this sea.

122 [Lord of Death] Yama's abode, containing hell's many tortures, was empty, so Yama went to the seat of Brahmā to discuss the issue. 123. Said Yama to Brahmā, "You must correct this situation! Caitanya Ṭhākura has saved all sinners. 124. All eighty-four hells have completely emptied out. Sixty thousand messengers of death sit idle in their rooms. 125. And so many sinners have been saved by Jagannātha; numbers of sinners were liberated when they consumed *mahāprasāda*; 126. numbers of sinners have been liberated by serving *tulasī*; numbers more of sinners have been saved in the Ganges at Vārāṇasī; 127. numbers of sinners have been freed through the *śālagrāma* stone; and so many more sinners have been saved by the name of Hari that 128. Yama's hell is devoid of any sinners at all! Caitanya Gosāñi has rescued all the wicked!"

129. Brahmā listened intently to and evaluated Yama's plea. Taking Indra and Śaṅkara, he went and met with these and the other gods on the earth. 130. During the night in his garden hut in Nīlācala, they petitioned Caitanya to return to Vaikuṇṭha heaven straightaway. 131. [He replied,] "I promise. On the seventh day of the bright lunar fortnight of Āṣāḍha [June-July] send a chariot and I will proceed to the heavenly citadel of Vaikuṇṭha."

132. While Nityānanda was attending the Car Festival, [Caitanya] related everything to Advaitācārya honestly. 133. "Nityānanda and you, Advaita, are of a non-different, single form. Because you do not really understand, you argue," he said. 134. "I pass my authority on to Nityānanda and to you, Advaitācārya. All of you adepts perform *saṃkīrtana*. 135. For twenty-eight years have I lived in Nīlācala. I tell you frankly that now I am going to the other realm. 136. Many will become Vaiṣṇavas, male and female. Devotee upon devotee will extend out over the earth...."

140. In the month of Āṣāḍha, [King] Pratāparudra sat in Prabhu's room while Advaita told stories of Kṛṣṇa, amidst many smiling faces. 141. Prabhu soaked his loin-cloth with the tears that streamed from his eyes. On fire from the story of Kṛṣṇa, he rivaled [the brillance of] a peacock....

144. On the fifth day of Āṣāḍha, as Caitanya danced during the Car Festival, he struck his left foot sharply on a brick. 145 [Prior to]

Advaita's return journey to Bengal the next morning, [Caitanya] privately revealed to him the particulars of what had transpired. 146. Then with all his companions, Caitanya played aquatic games in the waters of the Narendra pool.

147. On the sixth day [of the light half of Āṣāḍha], admitting that the pain raged in his foot, he finally lay down in his hut. 148. He revealed everything to [Gadādhara] Paṇḍita Gosāñi. "Tonight, at the dark hour of ten, I shall go away for good." 149. Multicolored heavenly garlands rained down from nowhere and many heavenly musicians danced on the main thoroughfare. 150. He summoned the gods, in chariot after chariot, and climbed into the car bearing the banner of Garuḍa. 151. His physical *māyā*-body fell to the earth where it remained as Caitanya departed from Jambudvīpa and soared to Vaikuṇṭha heaven.

152. Many of his attendants died from the bite of the serpent of separation. Meteors fell, thunder boomed, and the earth quaked. 153. When they heard, Nityānanda, Advaitācārya, Viṣṇupriyā and Śacī Ṭhākurāṇī fainted. 154. Nityānanda consoled and reassured Śrī Rāmadāsa and all his followers. 155. Puruṣottama and the other followers of Advaita fell silent upon hearing the news of Caitanya's passing.

The mythic element dominates this account. That Caitanya would be directly compared to Kṛṣṇa in this text is of course no cause for protest. The mythic framework in which it is set is perfectly understandable by the average Vaiṣṇava, for it confirms what has already been described in the *Bhāgavata purāṇa* (II.30-31)[22] and other texts, such as the *Mahābhārata* (16.4)[23]: Caitanya, like Kṛṣṇa before him, died from a wound to the foot,[24] but the parallels are even greater. Like any perfected being, Caitanya possessed a foreknowledge of his death, just as Kṛṣṇa knew of his impending doom from the curse of the ascetics and from Gandhārī's prophecy (*MBh* 11.25.38-42). Rather than subvert *karma*, which is certainly within the capacity of the supreme lord (*MBh* 16.8), Kṛṣṇa consented to it and allowed himself to be killed at the appointed time. Kṛṣṇa repaired alone to the forest—separating himself from his compatriots—where the most excellent of hunters, Jara, spied him. Thinking he was a deer, Jara fired the arrow that pierced Kṛṣṇa's foot. Horrified at what he had done, Jara begged for Kṛṣṇa's mercy and by meditating on him, was saved at the time of Kṛṣṇa's ascent

to Vaikuṇṭha heaven. As Kṛṣṇa ascended in this chariot, the heavenly musicians and other celestial creatures sang, while the earth grieved over the cataclysmic event. Similarly, Caitanya struck his foot on a brick or shard—the verb is actually causative, i.e., literally the brick struck Caitanya's foot—in an apparent accident. The parallels are too striking to be ignored.

That Yama, in consultation with the gods, becomes the agent for ending Caitanya's stay could certainly be cause for some disagreement, but this is a relatively common convention in the *pāla-gāna* and *maṅgala-kāvya* genres, from which this text draws much of its inspiration and style. It does, however, seem to trivialize Caitanya's nature as god, especially as it might be interpreted by the theologians. The real controversy, however, seems to stem from the foot injury itself. Were Caitanya truly Kṛṣṇa, his body (as noted by the earliest authors) would not be subject to any physical distress because it was not material, yet in v. 151 Jayānanda tells how Caitanya laid down his physical or *māyā*-body to return to Vaikuṇṭha.[25] Jayānanda is alone here in his proposition that Caitanya left any physical remains, but he provides no clue to its handling.

Jayānanda manages to present a narrative sequence that in its broadest sweep mirrors the narrative patterns of the other death accounts. While actively worshiping the deity and surrounded by his devotees during the Car Festival, Caitanya wounds his left foot—and the traditional symbolism would require it to be his left—which turns septic; he retires to his hut in semi-seclusion; and after conferring secretly with several close devotees, he rides his chariot to Vaikuṇṭha heaven amidst the appropriate glory and catastrophe. Even though the content of this narrative is largely purāṇic and unique in its reasoning about Caitanya's death, Jayānanda still constructs his story in terms that are analagous to his peers'; the specific context and some of the content is altered, but the underlying structure remains constant.

Caitanya Walks into the Sea

There is a popular story that Caitanya gave up his life by simply walking into the sea, but the story has little textual support.[26] Apart

from the appeal of the water to all Bengalis—Bengal being largely defined by that element and so too Puri—the symbolism of crossing over the ocean of existence (*saṃsāra*, lit. the confluence of rivers) to reach the other shore of salvation is decidedly prominent in the Vaiṣṇava literature, as witnessed in several of the narratives we have translated above. It invokes the universal religious symbolism of primal waters, which represent the fount of creation, the womb, etc., so well known in psychoanalysis.[27] The first piece of textual evidence attesting this end to Caitanya is rather late and of dubious authorship. The text, titled *Sādhanabhakticandrikā*, carries the signature line of Narottama Dāsa, but in the opinion of Nīradaprasāda Nātha, who has critically edited all of Narottama's works, this piece is probably the work of another Narottama Dāsa in the late eighteenth century, nearly a hundred-fifty years later. The reference is only in passing as the author extols the virtues of dying in the pilgrimage center of Vraja. He laments his own misfortune at having missed meeting Caitanya and a chance to study under the great Vaiṣṇava scholars of the region.[28]

> 81. Because my status was low and stained, all of the Gosāiñs [Gosvāmins] have already disappeared and gone. 82. Who else can make me hear the sound of "Gaurāṅga?" He caught sight of the sea and departed, casting off his worldly form. 83. The six Gosāiñs, starting with Rūpa and the rest, have all gone their way.

In a considerably more modern composition, Sanātana Dāsa Bāul, a wandering mendicant-bard, sings the following:[29]

> Gaurāṅga of Nadīyā, with his friends and chums—
>   What play makes Mother Śacī's only boy?
> "My beloved Kṛṣṇa!" cried he
>   and into the black waters,
> mad he leapt.
>   He never came up again.
>
> *Such a mad man I have not found,*
> *No, I'm not so mad as that.*
> *Such a mad man I have not found.*

The lack of specificity suggests a number of possibilities. These accounts could be, as indicated above, "reasonable" explanations

of Caitanya's death, especially considering the absence of a body to
bury or cremate. But the connection between his madness (*pāgala*)
and jumping into the waters recalls a series of events recorded in
the biographical literature. Caitanya frequently jumped into one
body of water or another, usually in the throes of ecstasy as he
recalled Kṛṣṇa's play with the *gopīs* along the banks of the Yamunā
River. In these episodes he would be swept away in the emotional
life of Kṛṣṇa's lover, Rādhā, or one of the other *gopīs*, transported
to a realm ordinary humans could not witness. In the later years
of his life, Caitanya's condition grew increasingly unstable as the
fire of separation (*viraha*) consumed him. The Gosvāmins interpret
these dissociative mental states as the onset of the emotional condi-
tion Rādhā-*bhāva*. The feminine aspect of Caitanya's androgyny,
the emotional life of Rādhā, dominated all else.[30] In the *Caitanya
caritāmṛta*, the text most committed to the explication of Caitanya's
Rādhā-*bhāva*, the author Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja records that while on
pilgrimage in Vṛndāvana, Caitanya twice jumped into the waters
of the Yamunā River and would have drowned had his companion
not pulled him to safety (2.17.141; 2.18.125-32). In Vṛndāvana
Dāsa's *Caitanya bhāgavata* (3.11.58-66), we read that Caitanya fell
into a well and was pulled out alive, but unconscious, by Advaita
and his other companions. But the most compelling story comes
from one of the final chapters of the *Caitanya caritāmṛta* (3.18.24-
79),[31] where Caitanya falls into the ocean.

> 24. In this way Mahāprabhu wandered all around; and from his
> hut he unexpectedly saw the ocean. 25. The swelling waves sparkled
> with the moon's radiance, glistening as if it were the waters of the
> Yamunā. 26. Mistaking it for the Yamunā River, Prabhu ran
> unobserved and plunged into the waters of the sea. 27. At the very
> instant of falling he fainted, aware of nothing. At times he sank and
> at others he floated on any number of waves. 28. He was tossed
> about, floating on the waves like a dried up stick. Who can fathom
> this *līlā* of Caitanya? 29. The waves carried Prabhu along in the
> direction of Konārak; sometimes they seized and dunked him; other
> times they floated him along. 30. In the Yamunā Kṛṣṇa played the
> water games with all the *gopīs*; and Mahāprabhu was submerged in
> that very sport.
>
> 31. When Svarūpa and the others could not find Prabhu they grew
> alarmed. "Where did Prabhu go?" they asked. 32. In a turmoil they

went, but none could spot Prabhu. When they did not see him they grew aprehensive. 33. "Did he go to the temple to see Jagannātha?" Did he suddenly fall delirious in another garden?" 34. "Did he go to the Guṇḍicā Temple or to the Narendra Pool?" "Did he go to Koṇārak via Caṭaka Mountain?" 35. Asking these and other questions, they searched all over for Prabhu. [Then] they gathered together some additional people and came to the shore of the sea. 36. They searched about like this throughout the night, until they were certain that Prabhu had disappeared. 37. In separation from Prabhu everyone was numb. Except for their suspicion of [his] harm, they could think of nothing else...

The episode concludes with the devotees locating Caitanya, who has been dragged out of the ocean by an understandably frightened fisherman, frightened because he is convinced that Caitanya is a ghost (*bhūta*). Svarūpa Dāmodara calms the fisherman and revives Caitanya by shouting the *mantra* of Kṛṣṇa's name. The devotees, much relieved, return with him to Puri.

Pattern or Coincidence?

What is striking in this ocean-dunking episode is how the narrative action mirrors the basic pattern used to describe Caitanya's death in the other stories. It is formulaic: Caitanya wanders off by himself, loses consciousness in the ecstacy of his religious experience, and then exposes himself to bodily harm or death. The places that are named in this story—that is, the sites the devotees automatically searched to locate Caitanya—are likewise formulaic. First, the same set is virtually mirrored in the account of the *Caitanya cakaḍā* of Govindadāsa Bābājī; these are the places the devotees immediately looked in their search for Caitanya after he disappeared. Second, these places represent the most sacred spots in the holy environs of Puri. Third, they coincide with the sites of Caitanya's death: the temples of Jagannātha and Gopīnātha, the processional path of Jagannātha which leads to the garden, and the waters of the Narendra Lake and the sea.

Noting the formulaic nature of the list of holy sites and the generalized and apparently recurring connection of the waters with Caitanya's madness, we are offered a clue to interpret the nar-

ratives of his death when the devotees attempt to explain to
Caitanya's fisherman-rescuer just what was going on in the mind
(and body) of Caitanya. Kṛṣṇadāsa writes in *Caitanya caritāmṛta*
3.18.74-77:[32]

> 74. Mahāprabhu remains in three states [of consciousness] all the
> time: an internal state (*antarddaśā*), an external state (*bāhyadaśā*), and
> a half-external state (*arddhabāhya*). 75. The state where he is [simulta-
> neously] partially external and partially internal is extremely intense.
> This state the devotees call by the name "half-external" (*ard-
> dhabāhya*). 76. When in this half-external state Prabhu mutters
> deliriously. He speaks to the sky and this is what all the devotees
> hear: 77. "I see the Kālindī River and I am going to Vṛndāvana! I
> see Vrajendranandana playing water games...."

The locus of activity, that is, where Caitanya's consciousness is
focused during these fits of madness can represent respectively the
three basic realms in which the deity operates: (a) the ordinary con-
sciousness of the devotee in this world; (b) the witnessing of the
eternal *līlās* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the idyll of Vṛndāvana; and (c)
the experience of unmediated consciousness as the lord of cosmos,
that is totally removed from this human world. Caitanya is initially
in the world, then half in this world and half in heavenly
Vṛndāvana, and finally totally removed from this world to the
primal reality. Using a Venn diagram, figure 1 shows the simple
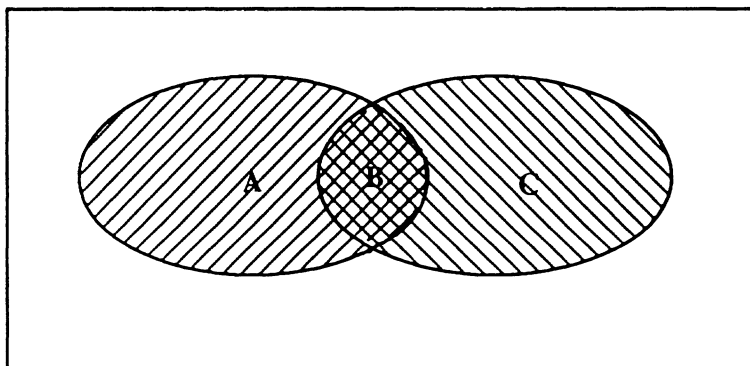relationship of these elements.

Fig. 1

The parallel to the pattern of Caitanya's actions in each of the death narratives is noteworthy. The death narratives literally embody and mirror his experience of his emotional world; as he traverses psychic landscapes that take him from this ordinary world of *saṃsāra* (= a) to the eternal heaven of Vṛndāvana (= c), his physical body in each of the narratives follows precisely the same path.

The pattern could simply be a coincidence, except that this pattern—which in general terms depicts the existence of two entirely distinct realms or modes of existence and the mediating way between them—recurs as a basic structure in the thought and practice of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community. The biographies make clear that Caitanya's cognitive state depended on or was at least intimately connected with the form of worship in which he was engaged. The evidence, made explicit above, points to normal cognitive functioning when he was in large groups of devotees or with the general public and involved in non-esoteric or common forms of worship, such as recounting the stories of Kṛṣṇa (= a). In the intensity of worship, especially among his select following, or when he was by himself, Caitanya would slip into an ecstasy characteristic of the extremely advanced devotee (= b). This ecstasy vacillated greatly through degrees of consciousness, a multitude of dissociative states, the most extreme forms of which are often characterized as epileptic (*mṛgīvyādhi*; *CC* 2.18.174). Finally, when his ecstasy overwhelmed him, he would vanish into unconsciousness (= c). These stages strikingly parallel the systematic formal designations of devotional progress in the orthodox theological and ritual texts.

Jīva Gosvāmin's *Bhakti-sandarbha*[33] and Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*[34] spell out in the most detail the formal system of religious practice (*sādhana*). There are minor differences in their presentation, but in summary, the devotee begins with sixty-four rather straightforward practices that fall into the category of fixed, mechanical rituals designed to inculcate devotion, *vaidhī bhakti* (= a).[35] As devotion is aroused, the devotee begins to animate these activities until the action is driven by a passion for Kṛṣṇa that is in most respects truly uncontrollable. This stage of devotion is described as *rāgānugā*, the conforming to or following after passion, an

increasingly spontaneous experience in which the devotee, through processes of yogic transformation, begins to realize his true spiritual identity as a female companion or servant of Kṛṣṇa (= b). Finally, when the devotee's devotion grows to the point where it completely controls his identity, he realizes fully and enters permanently into that spiritual body, and slips away from this earthly realm to inhabit permanently the heaven appropriate to his devotion (= c). This consummation of devotion is styled *rāgātmikā*, the full embodiment of passionate love, *prema*, for Kṛṣṇa.[36]

For a devotee to experience the transformations just described— from an ordinary human being to one whose very self (*ātman*) is suffused with love (*prema*)—is to alter the very core of his being, not merely his cognitive faculties. It is no coincidence that Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava ontology shares this same basic structure to describe the nature of creation itself. In the *Bhagavat*-and *Paramātma-sandarbha*,[37] Jīva Gosvāmin states that the godhead manifests three primary powers (*śaktis*), out of which emanate the whole of creation. These *śaktis* are *svarūpa* (or *antaraṅgā*), *māyā* (or *bahiraṅgā*), and *jīva* (or *taṭasthā*). One extreme is external to *bhagavān*, the gross, physical stuff of cosmos, never affective of the essential (= a); its opposite extreme is the innate power of *bhagavān*, the lord's intrinsic, subtle, and essential nature (= c); and the middle is the liminal combination of the two, physical material infused with life or spirit (= b). It is in this latter, middle category of existence that man finds himself, for man is a *jīva*, or living being. To develop devotion from a mechanical technique of external ritual to a spontaneous realization of pure passion, to move the locus of consciousness from this physical body to the purely spiritual body of the perfected devotee, is to move from the gross physical universe to the subtle reality of heaven, from *māyā* to *svarūpa śakti*, from a position of estrangement from Kṛṣṇa to the immediate and direct company of Kṛṣṇa. And it is precisely these relationships that can be found to parallel the changes in Caitanya's mental condition, the steps he takes to leave earth and return to heaven, and which effectively describe the transformation that takes place in each of his death narratives. See Table 1.

Table 1

Relationship of Categories

Venn diagram	A	B	C
ontology	*māyā*	*jīva*	*svarūpa*
śakti	*bahiraṅgā*	*taṭasthā*	*antaraṅgā*
devotion	*vaidhī*	*rāgānugā*	*rāgātmikā*
feature	mechanical	improvisational	spontaneous
consciousness	*bāhya*	*arddhabāhya*	*antar*
narrative	wordly worship with devotees	separation from devotees	heavenly return
realm	profane	transition	sacred

The three ranges of the Venn diagram capture a set of relationships that serve to describe the human existential condition on a number of different, but parallel levels.

The three step sequence might on the surface appear to describe Arnold van Gennep's well-known tripartite division for the rites of passage—*séparation, marge, agrégation*—and even more since death is one of the classic passages.[38] But an important distinction must be made in the conception of these categories which demonstrates their difference from van Gennep's. Van Gennep's divisions are clearly demarcated steps, while the Venn diagram illustrates that the transition phase is composed of the mixture of the two extremes. As a result, the three stages represent a continuum from ''a'' to ''c'', rather than three distinct, separate conditions or states. The emphasis here is on the processes of transformation. Notably, Victor Turner modified van Gennep to emphasize the role of process in ritual and the creation of a liminal anti-structure,[39] but the overlapping of categories in the Vaiṣṇava model distinctly differs by representing transition in terms of a continuum, with gradations so subtle that the theologians themselves have difficulty describing the movement. The middle ground is not an anti-structure, but constituted by the merging of the two extremes. If the three phrases, as we have reified them, are but representative nodes in a continuum, movement from point to point cannot be sharply defined, and such lack of definition is precisely what we find in the Vaiṣṇava

ontology, ritual, and the story sequence of Caitanya's death. Experience of this world is not understood as existence in discrete states, but rather a constantly shifting experience, which is conditioned by and referenced to one's point on the continuum of *saṃsāra*, the cycle of lives. The point of death cannot under these circumstances put into play the radical binary opposition of life-death which has such finality in much of Western thought. It is, for these Vaiṣṇavas, a passage of a different order.

Conclusions

The stories of Caitanya's death, according to the orthodox position, should never have been written, for to write of his death is to deny implicitly the true nature of Caitanya's divinity, his identity with Kṛṣṇa. In writing these stories, the authors have moved against proper belief, and are in some way guilty of promoting a form of heterodoxy, although one suspects that none would be pleased with such a description, for they undoubtedly wrote in great piety. The venue for each narrative—two temples, a garden, and the ocean—were all places in which Caitanya passed much of his time during the later years of his life. Any would be an appropriate place for his passing because each is sacred in space and time to the believing community, several of which represent institutionalized *axes mundi*. But the shape of each of these death episodes, which only becomes visible when the surface features of the narratives are compared, bespeaks a way of thought, a basic cognitive construct that structures the way Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas view and experience this world. The pattern replicates itself in a number of ways—in theology, ontology, and ritual—so it is only to be expected to surface in the narratives of Caitanya's life. The only narrative feature that this basic pattern does not easily account for is the presence of the king in three of the Jagannātha stories. The solution is, I think, relatively clear, for those three stories are not Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava texts, but works from the Pañca-sakhā tradition of Orissa, which conceives of the ultimate in terms that are appropriate to a divine sovereignty (*aiśvarya*) rather than a loving sweetness (*mādhurya*). Divine kingship plays a major role in the administration of cosmo-moral order (*dharma*) in the beliefs of the Pañca-sakhā, but not so

for the Gauḍīya Vaṣṇavas, and less so for Caitanya. Even though they derive from a different set of historical sensibilities and should for that reason be evaluated apart from the others, the Oriya stories still parallelled the others, which suggests that this basic cognitive construct was common to more than the immediate Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community, perhaps embracing all Vaiṣṇavas or Hindus generally. A Lévi-Straussian structural analysis of the full cycle, which one would expect to allow for such variants, is not appropriate, however, because the biographies are not simply mythic cycles, nor does the collective set of death narratives represent more than a fraction of the totality of stories concerning Caitanya. Yet when the surface narratives of Caitanya's death are seriously compared, the result is rather ironic. The authors who violated Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy in order to relate this story, in fact, confirmed the very basis on which the orthodox belief was founded. The unity of the tradition is striking and this is just what proponents of discourse theory, such as Foucault, would argue: even those who diverge in their opinions are limited in the way they can think by prevailing modes of discourse. Consequently, the ritual pattern of devotion becomes embodied in an episode of minimal theological significance, and even though the biographers disagreed greatly in his portrayal of Caitanya's death, each managed to construct their heterodox narrative in a remarkably orthodox mold.

Dept. of Philosophy and Religion   TONY K. STEWART
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27695-8103, USA

    [1] It should be noted that recent "reader response" criticism, largely stemming from the prod of the literary deconstructionists, proposes that little or nothing of the author's beliefs or intentions can be divined from the literary work, and this indeed is a sound argument, especially for fiction. But in the case of sacred biography or hagiography, we can argue that the author can and does declare his

or her belief or intention to believe by virtue of the act of writing. The author may not have done it well and we may not perfectly understand, but the intention remains. That the religious community accepts certain of these writings, likewise confirms that the writings do in fact reflect at least some of the beliefs of that community.

² Murāri Gupta, *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta*, edited by Mṛṇālakānti Ghoṣa, 4th ed. (Calcutta: by the editor, 459 GA).

³ Kavikarṇapūra [Paramānanda Sena], *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta mahākāvya*, edited with introduction and Bengali translation by Prāṇakiśora Gosvāmī (Calcutta: by the editor at Śrī Gaurāṅga Mandira, n.d. [1377 BS]).

⁴ The point is reiterated in Act 1 of his much later biographical drama, *Caitanya-candrodaya nāṭaka* (edited with Bengali translation by Rāmanārāyaṇa Vidyāratna, 2d ed. [Murshidabad: Rāmadeva Miśra at Rādhāramaṇa Press of Barahampura, 1330 BS]).

⁵ Vṛndāvana Dāsa, *Caitanya bhāgavata*, edited with the commentary *Naṭāīkaruṇā-kallolinī ṭīkā* by Rādhā-govinda Nātha, 6 vols. (Calcutta: Sādhanā Prakāśani, 1373 BS); see also 2.1.294; 2.10.280; 2.13.365; 2.23.508; and 2.26.223. In 3.9.169-73, Vṛndāvana Dāsa extends this appearance and disappearance to all Vaiṣṇava devotees who accompanied Caitanya:

> 169. All of these Vaiṣṇavas came down as incarnations (*avatāra*). Prabhu sent all of them down prior to his own coming. 170. In precisely the same manner as Pradyumna, Aniruddha, and Saṃkarṣaṇa, and just as Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, and Śatrughna, 171. so those Vaiṣṇavas who came down to accompany Prabhu did so at Prabhu's express command. 172. Therefore these Vaiṣṇava devotees neither took birth nor died; they simply accompanied [Prabhu] when he came and accompanied [him] when he left. 173. Vaiṣṇavas are never subject to the birth bound by *karma*—this is witnessed to in the *Padma Purāṇa*.

This proposition appears to be one of the first systematic statements of the *dhāman*-incarnation theory that became a major feature of mainstream Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology, following the lead of the *purāṇas* that make clear that Kṛṣṇa descends to earth only with his realm and retinue, his total environment.

⁶ Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Caitanya caritāmṛta*, translated with an introduction and commentary by Edward C. Dimock, Jr., edited and revised with addenda by Tony K. Stewart, Harvard Oriental Series no. 50 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, in press). The translation is based on: Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Caitanya caritāmṛta*, edited by Rādhā-govinda Nātha, with the commentary *Gaurakṛpātaraṅgiṇī*, 4th ed., 6 vols. (Calcutta: Sādhanā Prakāśani, 1369 BS). The text is hereafter cited as *CC*.

⁷ The literature on the religious interpretation of death is voluminous. Among the more germane studies to the History of Religions, one might profitably examine the following: S.G.F. Brandon, "The Personifications of Death in Some Ancient Religions," *John Rylands Library Bulletin* 43 (1961): 317-35; G.M. Carstairs, "Attitudes to Death and Suicide in an Indian Cultural Setting," *International Journal of Psychiatry* 1 (1955): 33-41; R.A. Craddick, "Symbolism of Death: Archetypal and Personal Symbols," *International Journal of Symbology* 3 (Dec., 1972): 35-44; Mircea Eliade, *Death, Afterlife, and Eschatology: A Thematic Source Book of the History of Religions* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1974); Herman Feifel, ed., *The Meaning of Death* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1959); R. Hertz, *Death and the Right Hand*, trans by Rodney Needham (New York: Free Press, 1960); J.E. Heuscher, "Death in the Fairy Tale," *Diseases of the Nervous*

System 28 (1967): 462-67; Frederick Holck, ed., *Death and Eastern Thought* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1974); Meena Kaushik, "The Symbolic Representation of Death," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 10, no. 2 (1976): 265-92; Bruce Lincoln, "Death and Resurrection in Indo-European Thought," *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 5 (1977): 247-64; J. Bruce Long, "The Death that Ends Death in Hinduism and Buddhism," in *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*, edited by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 52-72; Albert Jay Miller and Michael James Acri, *Death: A Bibliographical Guide* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977); H. Orenstein, "Death and Kinship in Hinduism: Structural and Functional Interpretations," *American Anthropologist* 72 (1970): 1357-77; R. Pannikar, "The Time of Death: the Death of Time (an Indian Reflection)" in *La Réflexion sur la Mort (Meleté Thanatou)*, 2e Symposium International de Philosophie (Athens: École Libre de Philosophie «Plethon», 1977), 102-21; Talcott Parsons, "Religious Symbolization and Death" in *Changing Perspectives in the Scientific Study of Religion*, edited by A.W. Eister (New York: Wiley, 1974), 217-26; Frank E. Reynolds and Earl H. Waugh, eds., *Religious Encounters with Death: Insights from the History and Anthropology of Religions* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1977); Donald Ward, "The Threefold Death: An Indo-European Trifunctional Sacrifice?" in *Myth and Law among the Indo-Europeans*, edited by Jaan Puhvel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 123-42; Heinrich Zimmer, "Death and Rebirth in the Light of India" in *Man and Transformation*, edited by Joseph Campbell, Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks, Bollingen Series 30, vol. 5 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).

⁸ The *Caitanya caritāmṛta* details the nature of *bhagavān* in numerous places, but see especially the first four chapters of the text, 1.1-4. Kṛṣṇadāsa's theological position of the dual incarnation, that is Caitanya as androgyne, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in a single body, poses additional problems. If Caitanya exists only in this dual form, then to speak of a return to heaven is to tell of Caitanya's ultimate demise, for in heavenly Vṛndāvana, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa must exist separately. The incarnation was explicitly to overcome this separation, which could only be effected on earth. One might surmise what would become of Caitanya in heaven and the resulting disintegration would undoubtedly have cosmic ramifications; whatever the result, an undivided Caitanya could not continue to exist in that realm. Conveniently, perhaps, Kṛṣṇadāsa avoids the issue altogether.

⁹ It should be noted that the more generally accepted position of silence is found in the earliest and the very last of the biographies, the latter *(CC)* clearly motivated to coordinate and unify the theological positions of the other biographies.

¹⁰ The lack of a body has led scholars to speculate at length regarding the nature of Caitanya's death. Based largely on cultural precedent as depicted in the Vaiṣṇava biographies themselves, Edward C. Dimock speculates that Caitanya was probably buried on the ocean shore much in the manner of Haridāsa, whose body was interred in that manner by Caitanya himself (see Section II, Introduction to the *CC*). S.K. De in his *Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal* (2d ed., Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1961), reports the various stories but does not speculate, unlike his predecessor, M.T. Kennedy, who in *The Caitanya Movement* (Calcutta: Association Press, 1924), 50-51, looking with a rather jaundiced eye at the motivations of the various actors, concludes the Caitanya was done in and buried by the local temple priests and that the stories of merging with various images were encouraged by them for purposes of revenue. The prominent Bengali scholar, D.C. Sen in his article "Śrīgaurāṅgera līlāvasāna" *Bhāratvarṣa* 16, pt. 2, no. 3 (Phālguṇa 1335 BS): 321-29, among others, created an uproar with his

speculation, again centering on the body, that Caitanya died of foot infection and was buried in the Guṇḍicābāḍi of Jagannātha. Probably in response to his rather intemperate remarks regarding "miracle mongers" and his use of Jayānanda's text (see below), rebuttals poured off the pages of Bengal's journals: see especially Vasantakumāra Caṭṭopādhyāya, "Caitanyadevera tirodhāna," *Bhāratvarṣa* 16, pt. 2, no. 5 (Vaiśākha 1336 BS): 735-40; Maṇīndracandra Rāya, "Śrīgaurāṅgera līlāsaṅgopana," *Śrī śrī sonāra gaurāṅga* 7, no. 1 (Śrāvana 1336 BS: 54-59); Sāradācaraṇa Dhara, "Śrīgaurāṅgera līlāvadāna o daktara dīneścandra sena," *Śrī śrī sonāra gaurāṅga* 7, no. 6 (Pauṣa 1336 BS): 305-313; and a postscript to his previous article, Maṇīndracandra Rāya, "Śrīgaurāṅgera līlāsaṅgopana," *Śrī śrī sonāra gaurāṅga* 7, no. 10 (Vaiśākha 1336 BS): 594-602. A number of other scholars have promoted these and other theories, but the most comprehensive summary of the speculation on "what actually happened" is a recent book Mālībuḍo [Yudhiṣṭhira Jānā] titled *Śrī caitanya antardhāna rahasya*, 2 vols. bound in one (Calcutta: Mayanā Prakāśanī, 1986).

11 Locana Dāsa, *Caitanya maṅgala*, edited by Mṛṇālakānti Ghoṣa (Calcutta: Amṛta Bājār Patrikā Office, 1354 BS), 210-11. The versification has been added for convenience.

12 Īśāna Nāgara, *Advaita prakāśa*, edited by Mṛṇālakānti Ghoṣa, 3d ed. (Calcutta: Sucārukānti Ghoṣa, 1339 BS). Versification has been added for convenience.

13 For summaries of these stories, see Prabhat Mukherjee, *The History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissa* (1940; reprint: New Delhi: Asian Education Services, 1981), 156-69.

14 See Hermann Kulke, *Jagannātha-Kult und Gajapati Königtum: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte religiöser Legitimation hinduistischer Herrscher*, Schriftenreihe des Südasien Instituts der Universität Heidelberg, vol. 23 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1978). See also K.C. Misra, *The Cult of Jagannātha*, 2d rev. ed. (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1984) and Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke and Gaya Charana Tripathi, eds., *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, New Delhi Branch, South Asian Studies no. 8 (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978).

15 Govindadāsa Bābājī, *Caitanya cakaḍā*, edited by Sadāśiva Rathaśarmā (Calcutta: Kailāsa Prakāśana, 1985), 57-60.

16 I was unable to confirm this account which is reported by Mālībuḍo, *Śrīcaitanyera antardhāna rahasya*, 295.

17 Vāsudeva Ghoṣa, *Vāsu ghoṣera padāvalī*, edited by Mālabikā Cākī (Calcutta: Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat, 1368 BS), 131, *pada* 146.

18 Narahari Cakravartī, *Bhaktiratnākara*, 2d ed. (Calcutta: Gauḍīya Mission, 1347 BS).

19 See Prabhat Mukherjee, *The History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissa*, 165.

20 Jayānanda Miśra, *Caitanya maṅgala*, edited by Bimenbehari Majumdar and Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1971).

21 All of the other biographies claim twenty-three or twenty-four years, but this text is very explicit (*aṣṭaviṃśati*); see also v. 135.

22 *Śrīmadbhāgavatam* of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, edited with Bengali translation by Rāmanārāyaṇa Vidyāratna, with commentary *Bhāvārthadīpikā* of Śrīdhara Svāmin, *Kramasandarbha* of Jīva Gosvāmin, and *Sārārthadarśinī-tīkā* of Viśvanātha Cakravartin (Murshidabad: Rādhāramaṇa Press of Baharatpura, 1304-1305 BS).

23 *Mahābhārata* of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, critically edited by Visnu S. Suthankar (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1933), hereafter cited as *MBh*.

²⁴ It should also be noted that Caitanya's first wife, Lakṣmīpriyā, died of snakebite to the foot, while Caitanya was away in East Bengal, but some saw her death resulting from the bite of the serpent of separation. See Murāri's *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta* 1.11.21-28; Kavikarṇapūra's *Kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta mahākāvya* 3.101-103; and Vṛndāvana Dāsa's *Caitanya bhāgavata* 1.10.98-107.

²⁵ As Dimock notes in the Introduction to the *CC*, Amūlyacandra Sena, a Calcutta physician, has cogently argued from the standpoint of medical plausibility that Caitanya's foot injury does qualify as the probable cause of death, and that, in spite of the obvious mythic narrative framework, Jayānanda's account must be the most historically accurate. So iconoclastic is this position and others in Sena's study that the Vaiṣṇava community succeeded in getting the publisher to withdraw his book from circulation; so complete is its erasure that when I visited the offices of the publisher in 1981 with a xeroxed copy of the title page, I was told that the book had never been published and that I was simply mistaken. See Amūlyacandra Sena, *Itihāsera śrī caitanya* (Calcutta: Sārasvata Library, 1965), esp. 196-99. Not surprisingly, it was this same story that caused so much of the negative response to D.C. Sen's article noted above.

²⁶ In 1978-79, I questioned, in a rather informal and unscientific manner, approximately twenty-five Vaiṣṇavas and scholars of the tradition regarding the manner of Caitanya's death, and the majority reported his drowning in the ocean among other accounts.

²⁷ An especially interesting study of the primal waters is Jeffrey Masson's *The Oceanic Feeling: the Origins of Religious Sentiment in Ancient India* (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1980).

²⁸ *Sādhanabhakticandrikā* in Nīradaprasāda Nātha, *Narottama dāsa o tāhāra racanāvalī* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1975), 705-12.

²⁹ The song was transcribed and brought to my attention by Carol Salomon from her personal collection. She also shared a commentary provided by the singer Sanātana Dāsa Bāul during her field work in West Bengal in 1976.

³⁰ See *CC* 1.4 and 2.8 for the details of this androgyny; see 3.13-20 for the ravings of Caitanya from his *viraha* in his later years.

³¹ The translation is not Dimock's, but my own.

³² The translation is not Dimock's, but my own.

³³ Jīva Gosvāmin, *Bhakti-sandarbha* in *Bhāgavata-sandarbha*, edited by Purīdāsa Mahāśaya, 6 bks. in 2 vols. (Vṛndāvana: Haridāsa Śarma, 1357 BS). A summary of these six texts can be found in S.K. De, *Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, 254-421 (the *Bhakti-sandarbha* is 354-80).

³⁴ Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*, edited with Bengali translation by Haridāsa Dāsa, with the commentaries *Durgamasaṃgamanīṭīkā* of Jīva Gosvāmin, *Artharatnālpadīpikā* of Mukundadāsa Gosvāmin, and *Bhaktisārapradarśinī-ṭīkā* of Viśvanātha Cakravartin, 3d ed. (Mathurā: Haribola Kuṭīra from Śrī Kṛṣṇajan-masthāna, 495 GA). A summary of this text can be found in De, *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, 170-203.

³⁵ According to the *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* (1.2.90-92, 238), the five most efficacious of these acts are: worshiping the deity in the temple; tasting the pleasures of stories of Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhāgavata purāṇa*; keeping the company of pure devotees of similar taste, temperament, and affection; singing the name of Kṛṣṇa, especially with other devotees; and living in the Mathurā region. Notably, Caitanya was practicing four of these prior to his death.

³⁶ For an excellent study of *rāgānugā-sādhana-bhakti*, see David Haberman, *Acting as a Way of Salvation: A Study of Rāgānuga Sādhana Bhakti* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[37] Found in Jīva Gosvāmin's *Bhāgavata-sandarbha*, op. cit. Summaries can be found in De, *Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement*, 272-314.

[38] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

[39] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969; reprint: Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977).

DISPATCHES FROM THE METHODOLOGICAL WARS

Review article

E. Thomas Lawson

It is becoming increasingly apparent that in the study of religion one of the axes around which methodological disputes range is the relationship between cultural and cognitive categories. Cultural anthropologists and historians of religion who, rather than settling for purely interpretive strategies, strive for explanatory theories about religious behavior seem to assume that the concept of culture (and the categories derived from that concept) carries sufficient theoretical weight to account for both the variability and the unity of cultural phenomena such as religion. Whenever such scholars do entertain psychological constraints on cultural theorizing they do so largely in an ad hoc manner. Even when they are willing to challenge the hegemony of "culture" as an explanatory categorial complex they employ either behavioristic, "personalistic", "hermeneutic", or psychoanalytic categories in their accounts of cultural phenomena such as religion.

With the emergence of the cognitive sciences, and, in particular the successes of theoretical linguistics in explaining important features of cultural phenomena, however, a new mood has arisen in a new generation of scholars who are no longer willing to assume that "culture" is an autonomous sphere capable of encompassing the crucial features of human thought and action, and capable of providing the key explanatory concepts necessary for an adequate understanding of religious thought and action. In particular, the assumption on the part of cultural anthropologists and historians of religions that culture consists of a *system* which, when understood

adequately, will account for all or most of the phenomena within that system has come under severe attack—and not only because of the deterministic implications associated with it. As a consequence there is evidently a considerable tension in recent methodological reflections on the study of religion.

This tension between cultural and cognitive categories (motivated by significant advances in cognitive psychology) as contenders for explaining human thought and action has become more conspicuous in recent methodological debate and has given rise to talk of a crisis in the study of religious phenomena.

One analysis of this crisis can be found in Hans Penner's *Impasse and Resolution: A Critique of the Study of Religion.* While Penner does not specifically define the crisis in cultural/cognitive terms he clearly seems to suggest an apparently cognitive solution to the methodological problems which arise in the study of cultural phenomena. Penner also, however, has other oxes to gore, namely, the *sui generis* notion of religion as "the sacred" (as found, for example, in the work of Eliade and his followers), the very idea of a phenomenology of religion (as found, for example, in the work of Bleeker), intellectualism (as found, for example, in the work of Robin Horton), and functionalism (as found in the work of a host of anthropologists and historians of religion).

Penner finds none of these standard approaches satisfactory, the *sui generis* because it is arbitrary, methodologically indescribable, and ultimately theological, the phenomenological because it has already been decimated by "post-structural" critique, the intellectualist because of its "positivist" view of both scientific and religious thought, and the functionalist because of its devastating critique by the philosophy of social science.

According to Penner, the failure of these approaches to the study of cultural phenomena such as religion has led to a critical impasse in the academy. But, according to Penner, we are not to despair. Resolution lies in a generally cognitive direction. Penner's own predilection is not to develop the implications of the most recent work in the cognitive sciences but to appropriate the goals and strategies made available in structuralist thought, particularly the proposals of Saussure and, later, Lévi-Strauss who, according to Penner "brought structuralism into the academic battlefield."

Penner is particularly impressed with the opportunities provided by structuralism for a synchronic analysis of religious phenomena. However, he is not content merely to assert the availability of such an analysis for religious phenomena, he is willing to demonstrate its applicability to the study of religion by presenting three case studies of structuralism's explanatory effectiveness.

His all too brief but fascinating and provocative case studies have to do with the oppositional relation between ascetism and caste in Hinduism, the putative contrast between normative and popular Buddhism (as discussed by Spiro in *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes*), and the synchronic structure of the myth of Shiva.

Penner has produced not only a trenchant critique of styles of analysis in cultural anthropology and the history of religion but a suggestive programmatic essay showing some of the promise of structuralism. He has not, however, motivated the cognitive aspects of structuralist thought with the theoretical strategies available in contemporary cognitive psychology, so we are still left with the problem of connecting the cognitive and the cultural. That task has been ably joined by Pascal Boyer in *Tradition As Truth and Communication: A Cognitive Description of Traditional Discourse.*

Boyer focusses upon the utterances made by ritual participants in ritual situations. He shows how common anthropological approaches to the explanation of the utterances made in such situations presuppose the applicability of a "cultural model." Such cultural models are assumed by anthropologists to provide a causal explanation of cultural phenomena such as ritual behavior. Specifically cultural anthropologists regard it as self-evident that people repeat rituals because rituals express ideas and people think ideas ought to be conserved. Rituals, therefore, can be studied as the expression of conceptions and world views. If you understand the world-view than you will understand the ritual.

Boyer, on the basis of both of his fieldwork and as a consequence of a serious philosophical examination of the received tradition in anthropology, has come to see that such an account not only creates more problems than it solves but is psychologically implausible to boot. For one thing, in cultures in which repeatable acts such as rituals depend upon the memory of the performance of previous

rituals, what representations people actually form are the surface features of words, songs and gestures in rituals and not the underlying world views or "deep" features.

What gets transmitted from one generation to another is neither the meaning of the myth or ritual nor the total world-view but the memorable features of repeatable events. In fact, according to Boyer, a careful study of how traditions are perpetuated in a society reveals that not everyone knows or says the same thing. There are differences between the various participants' representations of the ritual and when such differences are identified they play a causal role in accounting for the repetition of the action. In other words, the evidence reveals that cultural interaction among participants consists of both shared and unshared knowledge. This fact of the variability of knowledge among participants is particularly important when we raise the issue of the truth of ritual utterances. Some types of utterances are supposed to convey particular truths, others are not. For example, the exact words in a ritual utterance will be regarded as true, but its implications will not be. Nor will a paraphrase. Not even the content of the utterance is always evaluated. Rather, it might very well be the position of the speaker or the circumstance of the utterance. The point of this is to show that a satisfactory account of truth-making at least in some societies has less to do with the status of propositions than with a far more circumscribed set of cognitive properties.

All of this leads Boyer to a rigorous analysis of the cognitive processes involved in religious discourse. The formalization of speech apparent in ritual discourse is not treated by its practitioners as a contextual matter of secondary importance, but as the heart of the matter. In fact translating such discourse into ordinary language is thought to denude the speech of its truth. Thus Boyer also shows us how complex the concept of literalism can become when analysing cultural phenomena.

From Boyer's point of view a desirable anthropological goal should be to provide some way of understanding what makes certain ideas and values so natural and obvious to people in a certain cultural environment. He is particularly critical of those anthropological views which argue that the acquisition of these ideas and values can be accounted for by the process of 'socializa-

tion'. He shows how implausible it is to assume that people live in coherent cultural environments, that the acquisition of ideas is a simple process, and that cultures are unconstrained by cognitive processes.

What requires explanation in a society is why some specific situations possess a special psychological salience for people, why the same situation receives different treatment by different cultural participants, and how different processes of memorization contribute to ritual action and specifically the utterances associated with it.

Boyer has written a brilliant book on a timely subject. The canons he fires in this methodological war have every chance of making space for the development of a cognitive approach to the study of religion that is psychologically plausible, anthropologically significant, and philosophically sophisticated. What more can we expect from the study of cultural phenomena?

Department of Religion   E. THOMAS LAWSON
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5010, USA

CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMENTARIES

The editors received a letter by Professor Yohanan Friedmann, Jerusalem, asking to publish the following corrections of his review (*NUMEN* 38 (1), 1991, p. 137-147):

p. 137, at the end of the first paragraph, read: ''...the author does not refute the conventional view...''
p. 138: Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ
p. 139: Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī
p. 139: Ismāʿīlī
p. 139: omit inverted commas after ''terms...
p. 140, line 6 from bottom: *mā*
p. 141, at the end of the first paragraph, read: ''...*al-muʿammar* rather than *al-muʿammir*...''

La triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek et la ''triade'' selon Jonas C. Greenfield

YOUSSEF HAJJAR

Dans le fascicule de *NUMEN*, paru en décembre 1990 (vol. XXXVII, fasc. 2, p. 280-283), prof. Jonas C. Greenfield, de l'Université hébraïque de Jérusalem, a publié un compte rendu de mon ouvrage *La triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek*. L'auteur de ce compte rendu a fait preuve d'une méconnaissance des faits religieux de l'Héliopolis romaine, commis une méprise grossière à propos du concept même de triade, tout en agrémentant son texte de quelques incongruités. Parmi ces dernières, je cite en passant cette remarque mesquine et insipide: «The premise stated in the title, that there was a triad set the format of the book» (*NUMEN*, p. 280, l. 13-15) et l'épithète déplacée et disgracieuse de «jarring» (*ibid.*, p. 281, denière linge) qu'il utilise à propos des parallèles que j'ai faits (*La Triade* III, p. 147-148) entre le voile en forme de niche ogivale de Vénus Héliopolitaine et celui d'autres déesses de l'Asie Antérieure. Greenfield ignore, semble-t-il, que les comparaisons pertinentes font partie intégrante de toute étude archéologique et iconographique, et que le voile de la déesse d'Héliopolis est un élément important de son accoutrement.

Mais ce qui, dans la recension du prof. Greenfield, me paraît le plus

déconcertant et particulièrement insoutenable et qui, de ce fait, motive la présente mise au point, c'est sa négation de l'existence d'une triade dans la colonie romaine d'Héliopolis et son affirmation gratuite selon laquelle «The existence of this triad has been doubted by many scholars» (*NUMEN*, p. 280, l. 18).

Réglons d'abord l'affaire des prétendus «many scholars». J'ai consacré plus de vingt ans de ma vie à des recherches sur les dieux, les cultes et les monuments héliopolitains, réuni et étudié avec la plus grande rigueur scientifique possible la documentation littéraire et archéologique pertinente et fait ma thèse de doctorat d'État à la Sorbonne sur la triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek, thèse qui a fait l'objet des deux premiers tomes de *La Triade*, parus chez Brill dans la série des *EPRO*. Eh bien, durant toutes mes recherches, je n'ai rencontré aucun savant mettant en doute la réalité d'une triade organisée dans l'Héliopolis romaine; sinon, je n'aurais pas manqué de faire cas d'une telle négation en démontrant son inanité et son manque de sérieux. Bien au contraire, tous ceux qui se sont occupés sporadiquement ou plus ou moins intensivement des dieux héliopolitains depuis environ un siècle ont considéré comme un fait solidement établi et une vérité incontournable l'existence dans l'Héliopolis d'époque impériale d'une triade formée de Jupiter, Vénus et Mercure. Partant de là, JE DÉFIE prof. Greenfield de me nommer un seul savant digne de ce nom qui aurait mis en doute cette réalité et d'indiquer les références.

L'unique négateur d'une triade dans la *Colonia Julia Augusta Felix Heliopolis*, l'actuelle Baalbek au Liban, est donc Greenfield lui-même. Son erreur fondamentale réside, en fait, dans son incompréhension du concept même de triade. La triade, selon lui, ne peut être qu'un groupement trinitaire de type familial. «The only triad, écrit-il, about which there can be no argument is that of Hatra» (*NUMEN*, p. 280). (Sur cette triade ainsi libellée dans de nombreuses dédicaces *mrn wmrtn wbr mryn* ''Notre Seigneur, Notre Dame et le Fils de Nos Seigneurs'', voir *La Triade* III, p. 182 et n. 3): références à A. Caquot et J.T. Milik). Et Greenfield d'ajouter à propos des dieux de la triade de Baalbek: «but there is no affiliation provided for them» (*NUMEN*, p. 281, l. 1 et 2).

Si l'on suit cette acception restrictive du concept de triade, telle qu'avancée par Greenfield, on devrait, selon toute logique, nier l'existence de la triade capitoline, car Junon n'est pas la mère de Minerve; de la Sainte-Trinité chrétienne, car elle ne comporte pas de Déesse-Mère; de la triade mésopotamienne Sin, Shamash et Ishtar, car Ishtar n'est ni l'épouse de Sin, ni la mère de Shamash; des triades palmyréniennes Bēl, Yarhibōl et Aglibōl, d'un côté, Baalshamīn, Aglibōl et Malakbēl, de l'autre, car aucune déesse ne figure dans ces deux triades. Point n'est besoin, je crois de multiplier davantage les exemples de cette sorte.

Greenfield ignore manifestement que le groupement trinitaire n'est pas uniquement et ne peut être uniquement de type familial. Des mobiles divers mythologiques, théologiques, historiques, démographiques ou même des affinités quelconques reconnues entre trois divinités peuvent être à l'origine de leur association de manière étroite, cohérente et hiérarchisée dans un même culte, chez un peuple donné et dans une civilisation donnée. L'Antiquité a, en effet, connu de nombreux autres types de triades de caractère cosmique, astral ou simplement dictés par l'un ou l'autre des mobiles que je viens d'énoncer. (Voir, à ce sujet, *La Triade* III, p. 180 et suiv.). D'autre part, la triade de Hatra n'est pas «the only triad» de type familial, comme l'affirme bien à tort Greenfield, car des triades de type familial existaient aussi en Anatolie (Teshub, Hebat et Sarruma), en Égypte (Osiris, Isis et Horus) et ailleurs.

Quant à la triade héliopolitaine, formée très vraisemblablement aux débuts de l'Empire, avec la fondation sous Auguste de la colonie romaine d'Héliopolis, et favorisée, sans doute, par l'implantation de colons citoyens romains dans la ville, elle résulte de l'intégration au couple Hadad-Atargatis qui devait être vénéré à Baalbek antérieurement à l'Empire, comme c'était le cas à Damas et à Hiérapolis, et qui fut interprété en Jupiter et Vénus, d'un dieu-tiers, Mercure, esprit de la végétation et dieu de fertilité comme ses deux parèdres. Fait significatif sur le rôle de Rome et des colons romains dans l'élaboration de la triade héliopolitaine, c'est que les vétérans installés dans la colonie romaine de Béryte et issus des mêmes légions fondatrices que ceux d'Héliopolis ont d'emblée adopté le culte de la même triade. (Voir, à ce sujet, les nombreux témoignages sur la triade héliopolitaine provenant du territoire de Béryte ou émanant de Bérytains à l'Étranger). Par contre, c'est une dyade qui continuait à régner à Damas et à Hiérapolis qui ne furent pas élevées au rang de colonies romaines.

Ceci dit, et après avoir évoqué la diversité des mobiles qui peuvent être à l'origine des groupements trinitaires divins organisés, il importe de définir, à présent, à l'intention du prof. Greenfield, le concept de triade avec ses caractéristiques déterminantes et d'énumérer, ensuite, les nombreux documents épigraphiques et iconographiques relatifs à la triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek.

Une triade est un groupement cohérent de trois divinités, attesté comme tel par des textes et des monuments et dont le mobile d'association peut varier selon les peuples et les civilisations, comme je l'ai déjà indiqué. Unis dans un même culte, les membres d'une triade sont *fréquemment invoqués en bloc* par les fidèles dans des dédicaces où ils sont énumérés dans un *ordre hiérarchique constant*, et ils sont aussi *fréquemment figurés en groupe* sur les monuments.

Ceci précisé, la triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek répond parfaitement à ces critères. Elles est invoquée en bloc et dans un ordre hiérarchique constant dans neuf dédicaces, et on voit ses membres groupés dans douze monuments figurés: huit suivant la mode orientale et quatre sous une forme hellénisée. Voici ces documents:

1 et 2: Deux dédicaces *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo), V(eneri), M(ercurio), diis Heliupolitanis*, gravées sur deux bases de colonnes des propylées du grand temple de Baalbek (*La Triade* I, nos 2 et 3).

3: Dédicace *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) H(eliopolitano), V(eneri), M(ercurio)*, gravée également sur une base de colonne des propylées du grand temple (*La Triade* I, no 4).

Ces trois dédicaces bien en vue à l'entrée du grand temple, en particulier les deux premières qui qualifient les dieux invoqués de «dieux d'Héliopolis» suffiraient à elles seules pour témoigner de l'existence d'une triade à Baalbek à l'époque romaine et, par suite, de l'attribution du grand temple à cette triade.

4: Dédicace *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) H(eliopolitano), Veneri, Mercurio*, gravée sur une base provenant de Beyrouth (*La Triade* I, no 196).

5: Dédicace *Regi deorum I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) H(eliopolitano), Veneri, Mercurio*, gravée sur un autel trouvé à Beyrouth (*La Triade* I, no 197).

6: Dédicace *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) H(eliopolitano), Veneri, Mercurio*, gravée sur un cippe découvert à Deir el-Qalᶜa, dans le territoire de Béryte (*La Triade* I, no 215).

7: Dédicace *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) H(eliopolitano), V(eneri), M(ercurio) Conservatoribus*, gravée sur un cippe trouvé à Šoueifāt, dans le territoire de Béryte (*La Triade* I, no 231).

8: Dédicace *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) et Veneri et Mercurio Heliupolitanis*, gravée sur un autel trouvé dans la région de l'agora à Athènes (*La Triade* I, no 268).

9: Dédicace *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Heliopolitano, Veneri Felici, Mercurio Aug(usto)*, émanant d'un Bérytain et gravée sur un autel découvert à Zellhausen en Allemagne (*La Triade* I, no 281).

10: Autel trouvé à Baalbek et représentant, sur trois faces, la triade héliopolitaine à la mode orientale: Jupiter debout entre deux taureaux, Vénus assise entre deux sphinx et Mercure en forme de terme, flanqué de deux animaux très mutilés, sans doute deux béliers, ses acolytes habituels. La quatrième face montre une scène d'adoration (*La Triade* I, no 5).

11: Cippe provenant de Bešouāt dans la Béqaᶜ et réunissant, sur trois faces, les membres de la triade figurés suivant la typologie

orientale décrite dans le monument précédent. La quatrième face représente Bacchus (*La Triade* I, no 130).

12:     Cippe octogonal de Fīkē dans la Béqaᶜ associant les trois divinités de la triade, représentées toujours à la mode orientale, à Allāt au lion et aux dieux planétaires Sol, Luna, Mars et Saturne. Les membres de la triade tiennent lieu dans ce cippe octogonal des trois divinités planétaires de même nom (*La Triade* I, no 136).

13:     Autel découvert à Antioche et figurant, sur trois faces, les membres de la triade suivant la typologie orientale. La quatrième face montre un vase flanqué de deux sphinx (*La Triade* I, no 170).

14:     Intaille provenant très vraisemblablement du territoire de la Béryte romaine et portant l'image de la triade héliopolitaine posée sur un socle commun. Jupiter et Mercure sont représentés à la mode orientale, alors que Vénus prend l'aspect de la Tyché de Béryte (*La Triade* I, no 198).

15:     Relief découvert à Fneidiq et alignant les images des dieux de la triade conformément à leur iconographie orientale habituelle (*La Triade* I, no 221).

16:     Plaque de marbre, trouvée sur le Palatin, portant en relief les images des membres de la triade suivant la mode orientale, mais seule la partie supérieure des figures est conservée (*La Triade* I, no 293).

17:     Intaille de provenance inconnue figurant la triade sous l'aspect oriental (*La Triade* I, no 322).

18:     Relief votif en forme d'édicule, trouvé à Baalbek et représentant les membres de la triade suivant la mode hellénique (*La Triade* I, no 6).

19-20: Deux médaillons de bronze découverts dans la Béqaᶜ et figurant les bustes des dieux de la triade à la mode hellénique. L'un de ces médaillons comporte, en plus, une tête enfantine, peut être Éros (*La Triade* I, nos 158 et 159).

21:     Petit autel de provenance incertaine, montrant, sur trois faces, l'image de la triade sous une forme hellénisée. la quatrième face est décorée des bustes du couple Sol-Luna (*La Triade* I, no 185).

Ces vingt et un documents épigraphiques et iconographiques prouvent, de manière éclatante, la vénération dans l'Héliopolis romaine d'une triade organisée, formée de Jupiter, Vénus et Mercure. Nier l'évidence qu'ils révèlent et ne pas s'incliner devant une vérité aussi lumineuse, c'est manquer d'esprit scientifique et, partant, de crédibilité.

En définitive, la recension publiée par Greenfield démontre qu'il est peu familier avec le contexte religieux d'Héliopolis-Baalbek sous

l'Empire. Il comprend mal, en outre, le concept de triade, en le réduisant, de façon arbitraire, à l'une de ses multiples facettes. Il identifie, à tort, Mercure Héliopolitain avec Nébo en affirmant, je cite: «Mercury—that is Hermes and before him in all likelihood Nabu (Biblical Nebo» (*NUMEN*, p. 280, 122-23), alors que le dieu babylonien n'a, d'une part, laissé aucune trace de son culte ni à Baalbek, ni dans toute la Cœlésyrie au sens strabonien du terme et, d'autre part, ne possède iconographiquement rien de commun avec le Mercure aux béliers d'Héliopolis; enfin et surtout, de nombreux témoignages antiques confirment, de façon explicite et indubitable, l'identité Nébo-Apollon. (Voir *La Triade* III, p. 98 et n. 11: nombreuses références dont l'article de R.A. Stucky intitulé: *Apollon-Nébo* et la monographie consacrée à *Nabu* par F. Pomponio, p. 225 et suiv.). Greenfield confond, enfin, Héliopolis avec Hiérapolis en qualifiant, de manière erronée, Mabbug d'Héliopolis (*NUMEN*, p. 280, 1.25), alors que cette ville de la région de l'Euphrate s'appelait Hiérapolis à l'époque gréco-romaine.

En conclusion, et compte tenu des erreurs accumulées dans sa recension, Greenfield aurait dû, en toute honnêteté intellectuelle, s'abstenir de rendre compte d'ouvrages dont la matière lui est manifestement étrangère.

Département d'études classiques   Youssef Hajjar
et médiévales
Université de Montréal
Montréal, Canada

Response to Youssef Hajjar

Jonas C. Greenfield

Prof. Hajjar has accused me of ignorance, that is a grave charge to which I must admit. There are so many things that I do not know that the accusation will surely fit. However, I do believe that so armed I can recognize ignorance in others but by inclination and training hesitate to broadcast that freely. In my review credit was given where due, and a civilized tone was maintained. I did not doubt that the three gods Jupiter, Venus and Mercury appear together in various inscriptions and iconographic representations at Heliopolis and elsewhere, and that they were the chief gods of Heliopolis. In my view this in itself does not make them a triad, nor do I believe that by virtue of their being declared a triad

they can be found in every fragmentary inscription, and every doubtful representation. Prof. Hajjar repeats his list, but I suggest that the list, and also the suggestion that the concurrence of the divine names constitutes a triad, be scrutinized carefully and closely. I, for one, did not note any affiliation given for these gods, and that for me would be one way of creating a triad. It is not the only way. Indeed Hajjar mentions two pairs of triads from Palmyra, viz. Bel, Yarhibol and Aglibol on the one hand, and Baalshamin, Aglibol and Malakbel, on the other. Granted that these are triads, and there are differing opinions on this matter, it is clear to anyone who unlike Hajjar, knows this material first hand, that these are functional triads. A major god, has two other acolyte gods associated with him. These are very often represented iconographically with moon-god and sun-god features. At Palmyra there are sufficient inscriptions so that the gradual accretion of the gods can be detected, and the independent function of some of these gods charted.

Prof. Hajjar shows no first hand knowledge of any Ancient Near Eastern Language or of recent literature on the religions of the area, he therefore cannot be expected to be aware of developments in the study of this field. I shall not list the many scholars who no longer take triads that seriously. This is an inheritance of a previous generation who sought, it would seem, for a *Sitz im Leben* for the trinity. Indeed, I would suggest that Hajjar should mention a contemporary scholar *at home* in the Near Eastern material who speaks of the Heliopolitan trio of gods as a triad. It is his basic lack of familiarity with the material that allows him to make all sort of assertions about the subject, and I repeat jarring iconographic comparisons. He speaks of the triad Sin, Shamash and Ishtar. Again, I doubt that anyone truly familiar with Assyro-Babylonian religion today considers them a triad. They occur together in some lists, while in others either Adad or Marduk is added. In some cosmogonies Sin is the father of both Shamash and Ishtar, so if one insisted on the three as a triad, it is an easily affiliated one, and if it makes Hajjar happy, then he could add the supposed Hurrian and Egyptian examples. In the Christian trinity the affiliation is all to clear, with the holy spirit substituting for the Déesse-Mère, to use Hajjar's term. He challenges my reference to Nabu as Mercury. Despite the references to the article by Stucky and the book by Pomponio, concerning the identification made of Nabu with Apollo, Mercury was also assimilated to Nabu in the Hellenistic-Roman period. Indeed, to a student of Near Eastern religions the identification with Apollo is more than a bit strange, since the usual identification of Apollo is with Babylonian Nergal and Canaanite Reshef. But the identification of Heracles with Nergal shows that in the Hellenistic-Roman world these identifications have there own raison d'être.

As to iconographic comparisons, this is a question of methodology. If Hajjar believes, as his work shows, that this consists of comparing seemingly identical items, without any idea of what they meant as originally used or of their cultural background, then more power to him. Here too he is a throw-back to an earlier age as an examination of the references cited in his notes show. No one doubts that the veil was an important feature in the dress of the Heliopolitan Venus, but as I stated (p. 282) the comparison to the use of the veil in early Mesopotamia, Ugarit and the Bible is meaningless for the cultural dimension was totally different. There actually are elements for comparison but these remain veiled from Hajjar. Despite Hajjar's assertion I did not find those comparisons 'jarring,' that adjective was used (p. 281) for the comparison of the *kalathos* worn by the Heliopolitan Venus, and by all the other Atargatis—like goddesses in the area, with the head-dress of Ishtar on Mesopotamian terra cotta figurines. My only suggestion is that the interested reader check for himself. I may indeed be wrong. Hajjar's calling my use of that word "déplacée et disgracieuse" is in turn jarring and indicative of a limited comprehension of plain English.

Finally, *en toute honnêté intellectuelle* I acknowledge a mistake in my review. Somehow, Heliopolis rather than Hiérapolis entered my text (p. 280). That the difference was known to me can be ascertained by reading my article "To Praise the Might of Hadad" in *La vie de la Parole. Études offertes à P. Grelot* (Paris, 1987), pp. 3-12. Prof. Hajjar might also profit from reading it.

Hebrew University   JONAS C. GREENFIELD
Faculty of Humanities
Mount Scopus
Jerusalem, Israel 91905

BOOK REVIEWS

The twenty-eight essays contained in this volume are divided into three parts. We shall concentrate here on Part II, ''Turning points in the development of some academic subjects and themes'' (ca. 100 p.), which consists of three sections entitled Indian religions, African religions and Significant themes. Each of the ten chapters of this Part II offers a short history of research in the area concerned, some pertinent problems and ''turning points'' in recent research, and a short bibliography.

In the section on *The Study of Indian Religions* F. Hardy, in dealing with Hinduism, sees as a turning point a fundamental reorientation of the relationship of the empirical Indian religions with the Vedas and the prescriptive Dharmashastras. He draws attention to the discovery in the sixties of the presence of truly monotheistic movements in Indian history, with abstract philosophical and theological writings which have to be distinguished clearly from texts that emerged from meditation and mystical experience. It also has become clear that there have been trends in Hinduism throughout history challenging the religious establishment, just as there have been so many regional religious cultures which rejected certain mainstream religious ideas.

P. Williams, in treating Buddhism, distinguishes the ''turning point'' of the destruction of Tibetan Buddhism and so many of its precious manuscripts in 1959 and during the Cultural Revolution, but also in the work of émigré Tibetan scholars in making Tibetan texts better known abroad. He points to recent revisions of the early history such as the dating of the Buddha's life, the ''schisms'' due to discords concerning monastic rule, the explanation of Mahayana Buddhism's probable origin, and a better knowledge of the doctrines of Madhyamaka and about the Buddha nature.

E. Nesbitt draws attention to the presentday expansion of Sikh studies and its relevance, in particular for the large Sikh community in Britain which is estimated at some 300.000 persons.

In the section on *The Study of African Religions South of the Sahara*, the four contributions are complementary to each other. R. Shaw traces the main phases of study of ''traditional'' African religions: the ''missionary''

approach, the ''theological'' normative categories of African cultural nationalism, and the empirical study of African religions in their own right. Anthropological approaches have developed similarly: from surveys and ahistorical functional analysis to questions of meaning (E.E. Evans-Pritchard, V. Turner), with a shift from imposing rational order from outside (R. Horton, structuralism) toward paying attention to experience and the ''moral knowledge'' of the people concerned (W. James). Subsequently R.I.J. Hackett concentrates on new religious movements in Africa, which have grown amazingly. They are characterized by a quest for freedom from external authority and tradition, a structural mobility, a pragmatic spirituality and a growing global orientation.

The next two chapters are again complementary. A. Hastings, dealing with Christianity in Africa, traces the successive interests of researchers and sounds a warning about the increasing absence of means to study African Christianity properly at the present. P.B. Clarke, treating Islam in sub-Saharan Africa, describes as a ''turning point'' in research the assembling, over the last forty years, of source materials for the history of Islam, in particular in West Africa, in local documentation centers. Besides historical studies, much research on local Muslim communities and their interpretations and applications of Islam has been carried out by social scientists. Clarke indicates a serious lack of comparative studies on Muslim-Christian relations in Africa. This holds true for such relations elsewhere too.

In the section devoted to *The Study of Significant Themes*, K. Ward discusses the philosophical study of truth and dialogue in religion. D. Hay and P. Moore devote two excellent chapters to modern empirical research on religious experience (especially at the Alistair Hardy Research Centre, Oxford) and recent developments in the study of mysticism.

In Part III, ''Pointers to New Directions'' (ca. 50 p.), John R. Hinnels stresses the fundamental role of the study of the arts ''in any attempt to understand religions'' (p. 270). Ursula King, in ''Religion and gender'' pleads for revision of current religious studies through feminist theory and gender analysis, which can influence favorably not only the concepts and methods used in religious studies but also religious thinking and practice. Kim Knott shows the importance of computing in religious studies research and teaching. In his ''Concluding Reflections: Religious studies in global perspective'', Ninian Smart takes a stock of presentday religious studies and pleads for establishing a ''World Academy of Religion'' open to worldwide communication between all sorts of bodies concerned with religion.

Part I of the book, "Historical Developments in Britain" (ca. 120 p.) offers a kind of history of religious studies in Britain: its establishment as a discipline distinct from theology, its expansion in the sixties and early seventies, and its contraction for budgetary reasons since the late seventies. Most illuminating is the history of teaching of religious studies at the Open University, most humorous the dealings of the Editors of the journal *Religion* with its Publishers. The British context—church-state relationships, developments in religious education and interfaith relations in Britain itself—is not ignored.

This book, however, is more than its contents only. Throughout, the reader is made aware of the wider world in which religious studies take place. The Foreword was written by no less than Archbishop Desmond Tutu of Cape Town, a former student of Professor Parrinder, who makes a plea for the current worldwide struggle for human dignity, a value preached in so many religions. The first fifteen pages of the book contain three personal Tributes to Geoffrey Parrinder whose remarkable career began during the Empire, when he obtained his university degrees from the mission field, and continued with the building up of the Religious Studies Department in Ibadan, and then with the Chair of the Comparative Study of Religions at King's College. He has actively promoted interfaith dialogue and leaves an impressive list of publications (p. 309-318).

This highly readable book, with its typical empirical scholarly orientation, is both an introduction to promising fields in religious studies and a testimony to presentday British scholarship. It witnesses to the forces of teamwork and the powerful will to survive in the Battle of Religious Studies in Britain, during one of the most trying periods for the country's institutions of higher learning. Finally, it is one of the very few Festschriften I know of, which have no picture of the celebrated person and are directed essentially towards the future.

Departement d'histoire et   JACQUES WAARDENBURG
des sciences des religions
Université de Lausanne
CH-1015 Lausanne-Dorigny

MICHEL MESLIN (Ed.), *Maître et disciples dans les traditions religieuses* (Actes du colloque organisé par le Centre d'Histoire comparée des Religions de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne 15-16 avril 1988). Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf 1990 (230 p.) ISBN 2-204-04157-2 FF 99.—

The book contains the contributions made on the occasion of a sympo-
sion organized in 1988 by the "Centre d'Histoire comparée des
Religions" of the Sorbonne University in Paris. Its aim is to show that
the relationship between a Spiritual Master and learners/disciples is essen-
tial in all religious traditions and should therefore be studied more closely.

The contributions make clear that the term "spiritual master" covers
very different phenomena from one religious tradition to the other and
moreover within each tradition during its historical development. The
former is applied to Hindu religions where through the immersion method
(p. 31) the guru tries to enable the disciple to discover the essence of
his/her real being which lies behind all apparent worldly evidence and can
only be realized as a result of longlasting spiritual exercise under the
guru's guidance. The variety of gurus and of their respective way of
guiding provides no tools to clearly distinguish the authentic master from
the charlatan. Examples for changes in one and the same religious tradi-
tion are the contributions on Taoism as well as on Eastern and Western
Christianity in the book. With regard to both traditions the contributions
show that different functions, such as the teaching of alchemy recipes and
the transmission of meditation technics, or different types of masters, such
as the Early Christian monk in Egypt, the starez in Russia or the lay
master in the 17th century Normandy, have so little in common that one
and the same expression can hardly be used for them in terms of
phenomenological systematization. This is even more true if one describes
the master as one of many actors in tribal religions of Africa or if one adds
Averroes and Maimonides as examples for masters in both, intellectual
and spiritual teachings. A completely different category is looked at if the
question arises to what extent law interpreters of modern Judaism keep
the line of tradition while positively answering to the claims and
challenges of their life times.

It is obvious that the contributions widen the perspectives of scholarly
research but urge upon the historians of religions the need for more
systematic work which would provide the framework for appropriately
selecting the historical data.

It is finally noteworthy that unlike French books in general this book
introduces each contribution with a short summary in both, French and
English so that the main theses are also accessible to those who don't read
French.

Universität Hannover   PETER ANTES
Bismarckstr. 2
D—3000 Hannover 1

Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, *The Quest for Human Unity. A Religious History.*
   Minneapolis: Fortress   Press   1990   (XIV + 289   p.)   ISBN
   0-8006-2422-X

The theme of this book is a timely and important one. It expresses the
imperative for human unity and traces numerous attempts towards its
realisation through the history of religions in East and West. The book
constitutes an expanded version of Professor Kitagawa's Hale Lectures,
given at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, in 1985 and,
in the words of one respondent, it presents the reader with ''an incisive
and richly illuminating exploration of 'religious visions of the unity of
humankind' '' (F. Stanley Lusby, p. 241).

Looking at the contemporary global community and its needs, and trac-
ing its past development in a world historical perspective, the author
wrestles with numerous issues of pluralism and points to new inter-
pretative perspectives of vision, encounter and synthesis. But they remain
pointers indeed and are little developed in any detail or depth. I had high
hopes when I initially began to read the book, hopes to have my vision
enlarged and strengthened, but this expectation was not fulfilled, for most
of the book consists of a fairly standard, summary exposition of the history
of religions East and West which has been done by several other writers
before, and sometimes with more substance. Kitagawa's particular
strength lies in the detailed exposition of Asian religious thought where he
clearly has the edge over western writers, given his expert knowledge in
this area.

The book is organised in five chapters, preceded by a Preface and Intro-
duction which highlight the difficulty of a comparative study, beginning
with the use of the notion ''religion'' itself and taking into account a
number of other issues which underline the magnitude of the tasks facing
the global community at the end of the twentieth century, especially as the
''canons of dialogue'' which could do justice ''to both the non-Western
and Western understanding of human experience have not yet been ham-
mered out'' (p. 13). The first chapter is simply entitled ''A Vision of
Unity'' but the yearning for a unified humanity, of which the author
speaks, is not at all theoretically elucidated. The chapter consists of a
string of historical data on early civilisations from the ancient Near East
to India and China. The historical thread continues through chapter 2
with ''Hebrew, Greco-Roman, and Christian Visions'', chapter 3 on
''Visions from East, West, and Islam'', and chapter 4 on ''Encounters of
Peoples, Civilizations, and Religions'', concerned with Reformation and
Counter-Reformation as well as the growing disunity and erosion of tradi-
tional values among religious and political communities in West and East.

This is followed by the fifth and last chapter on "The Search for a New Synthesis" which contains more stimulating and controversial reflections, especially in its last section on "Global Synthesis and the Unity of Humankind".

The book has many strengths. It is a masterly summary, lucidly written and very readable, well referenced (although not always as up-to-date as one might wish), and supplied with a substantial bibliography. Its message comes across clearly: we are experiencing a new world order in the making where there is a great need to "re-vision" our world situation. In fact, this is an urgent task particularly incumbent on those "concerned with spiritual welfare and the vision of the unity of humankind" (p. 238) and the religious traditions of East and West possess sufficient resources to draw upon in creating the new synthesis needed for the human community now.

Not all readers will necessarily be sympathetic to such an approach. I happen to share and endorse it, at least in principle, but that is why I found the book rather disappointing. The author asserts and postulates rather than argues and substantiates positions in detail. The latter would require a conceptually more developed analysis of the idea of human unity as well as of the complexity and dynamic of religious pluralism and of different modes of dialogue. The "perennial vision" of human unity has remained a vision, a powerfully transformative idea at the heart of religious thought, and although it has at times found partial embodiment in some religious, social and political institutions, the power of the vision, the strength of the quest for unity and the urgency of the global task now are ultimately not demonstrable from historical facts. This is why I would hold, with Kierkegaard, that historical facts can never prove the truth of faith. "Der Ansatz ist falsch". The case to be argued for—the quest for human unity—cannot be primarily and exclusively argued from historical facts but requires a detailed philosophical, sociological and historical analysis of the *idea* of human unity and what it entails. Alas, we do not yet have anything in the contemporary study of religion which matches the sophistication of debate surrounding the world system and globalisation theories among economists and sociologists. And yet the history of religions provides us with tremendous resources, not only for envisioning new forms of human unity and world order, but also for developing new approaches to scholarship.

From the perspective of historical scholarship it is somewhat contradictory that the author refers to "common era" but uses the old "B.C." and "A.D." for dating. From the perspective of contemporary enquiry it is even more implausible why inclusive language has not been used con-

sistently throughout the book: there is "humankind", but "civilised man" (p. 96) remains by himself.

Dept. of Theology and Religious Studies   URSULA KING
University of Bristol
36 Tyndall's Park Road
GB—Bristol, BS8 1PL

CHRISTOPHER VECSEY (Ed.), *Religion in Native North America.* Moscow,
    Idaho: University of Idaho Press 1990 (201 p.) ISBN 0-89301-136-3
    $ 22.95

Åke Hultkrantz has not only been a tireless observer of Native American religions, but has also been a keen observer of observers. On more than one occasion he has taken stock of the academic study of Indian traditions, and in the epilogue to this book he does so once again, focusing particularly upon the past decade of research. In a broader sense, the inter-relationship between observers and the observed provides the focus for this collection of articles all of which, most fittingly, were written in honour of Hultkrantz.

The three main sections of the volume do not, however, define themselves in terms of the *academic*-Native American inter-relationship. Instead, having devoted four articles to establishing something of the "Traditions", the book moves on to consider Indian responses to their experience of colonisation as "Transitions", and the Euroamerican appropriation of Indian beliefs by "Musers and Abusers". This is a very welcome fresh approach, but on the whole the book does not quite fulfil its potential.

The "Transitions" section certainly raises some essential issues. Guy Cooper's article weighs the effects of outsider influence in terms of traditional agriculturalist "collectivism" and traditional hunter/gatherer "individualism" respectively, although the possible connotation of monadish chaos in the latter term might have been avoided by opting instead for the notion of *structural* non-unity or "pluralism". Most definitely, the threat to religious pluralism is vital to the understanding of the effects of colonisation. Thomas McElwain's study of Iroquois hymns is linguistically careful and revealing, although his hardly surprising conclusion that these Native Americans retain a strong traditional cosmological base in their Christian life raises questions left unanswered: Has anything, therefore, actually changed? If not, what then is the religious, social and political significance of centuries of prozelytising?

The final article in this section is Paul Steinmetz's analysis of Peyote visions as a form of shamanistic healing, and while his documentation has intrinsic interest, his development of the concept of sacramentality as applied to Australian Aboriginal Studies by W.E.H. Stanner unfortunately revives the weakest part of the great anthropologist's analysis (a point Stanner himself conceded).

The "Musers and Abusers" section was the most promising, and one which I approached with high expectations. There was little one could quibble over in Armin Geertz' critique of Waters' *Book of the Hopi* or William Powers' exposé of Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* but, to mix my metaphors, I wonder if they might have thrown the baby out with the straw man. Do scholars really need reminding that these books are not all they pretend to be? And is this really the issue, or could we perhaps instead consider further the positive influence of such popular texts on later generations, Indian and Euroamerican alike?

This is something Amanda Porterfield takes up in the most refreshing and useful article in the collection. Without losing her ability to empathise, she considers half a dozen prominent Native American spokespersons' views of their own tradition, revealing their accomodation of Western interests, ecological agendas and post-traditional realities. Amongst her data she includes reference to Sam Gill's controversial thesis that Mother Earth is a recent creation, "a universalized distillation of [those] aspects of native life addressed to Americans and Europeans assumed to need education in moral attitudes toward land and resources" (159).

Which takes us back to the beginning, for in the first section entitled "Tradition", Jordan Paper and Marla Powers set the tone by advocating, contra Gill, that Mother Earth is the quintessence of Indian spirituality. As Hultkrantz notes in his epilogue, the Mother Earth issue has been the focus of recent heated debate (181) and this collection rekindles it on many occasions.

Powers in fact misinterprets the controversy when citing Gill as having criticised "Hultkrantz's notion of the North American Indian goddess" (37), for what he was at pains to note was that goddesses (who are well documented) are *not* synonymous with Mother Earth. Powers' slip adds further weight to the view that academics are prone to these unwarranted equations, although her Lakota data in fact indicate their cultural heroine was *not* the same as a Mother Earth, even though ethnographers had previously jumped to such a conclusion. Nonetheless, Powers shuffles Mother Earth front stage as she draws the curtain down, and her rationale is little more than *a priori* dogmatics: "The argument that Mother Earth or other goddess figures are universal should be considered equally on

biological grounds as on historical ones''(46). Had Geertz in this very volume not criticised quasi-academics for ''the construction of an interpretative framework based on faulty data and methods in fulfillment of a soteriological dream of how humans *ought* to be'' (119)?

And so to Jordan Paper's opening contribution. Again, the *a priori* statements—''Women mirror Earth'' (17), ''Women understand Earth from the very nature of their lives'' (18). Whereas Powers appeals to the universality of mother-child associations, Paper seems to hail the notion of lunar (phase-locked menstrual?) synchrony, together with (but this I cannot fathom) women's rhythmic association with the ''ebb and flow'' of the *Earth's* rhythms (a mating season, perhaps?). Paper's article is hopelessly confused and confusing, despite some promising passing references. So male High Gods are post-Christian developments (5,7), but not Mother Earth, for this is not a Christian doctrine (14). Similarly, he maintains a patriarchal ethnographic tradition has actually suppressed all that was female within Indian culture (4). This is nonsense. Patriarchal theory loves nothing better than to 'discover' the 'other' is other in terms of gender symbolism. Thus the nineteenth century fascination with 'primitive' matriarchy and mother-right. Thus the Christian notion (from at least the time of St. Augustine) of the pagan devotees of Mother Earth. And thus, perhaps, the history of Mother Earth herself, for if she did not exist there can be little doubt patriarchal scholarship would have invented her to juxtapose with their High God of the sky.

But, I wonder, have I read the first section of the book in the wrong way, led astray by the heading ''Tradition''? For it is not amongst Native Americans nor the creators of popular culture that this book evinces ''Musers'', possibly ''Abusers'', and certainly perpetuators of perennial academic myths.

> Within Earth's narrow, dark, warm, moist crevices, humans encounter her essence .... Within woman's narrow, dark, warm, moist crevice, males encounter her essence. (17)

Meticulous scholarship! A hymn? The credo for a new religious movement or an old one refashioned? I leave readers of this review to draw their own conclusion.

Department of Religious Studies   TONY SWAIN
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006, Australia

OBITUARIES

1991 was a sad year for students of Chinese religion. On Febr. 9, 1991, Edward H. Schafer (b. Seattle, 1919) passed away at Berkeley, Calif., at the age of 77. An exceptional man and scholar, Schafer taught not only sinology but a joyful passion for Chinese literature and mores, together with the most exacting standards of scholarship which he combined with unparalleled breadth of knowledge. The almost forbidding quality of his erudition was often hidden behind great gentleness and warmth of heart and a unique combination of both learned and sarcastic humour. His contribution to Taoist studies was immense, especially as he added a new dimension to our understanding by demonstrating that Chinese literature can be fully appreciated only by those familiar with Taoist religion and Taoist imagery. Beyond religion in the narrow sense, he altered, as one reviewer put it, "the way we look at a major portion of traditional Chinese culture". And there are many who will miss the irreplaceable friend even more than the unique scholar.

The above paragraphs are summarised from an obituary notice which the Editor of the *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie*, Anna Seidel, published in that journal (vol. 5, p. 458). Anna Seidel (b. in Berlin, 1938) died in San Francisco, during what was meant to be a short visit, on 29 Sept., 1991. Member of the E.F.E.O., she worked since 1969 in Kyoto where, in due course, she became co-director of the Hobogirin-Institute and co-editor of the Hobogirin Encycl. of Chinese Buddhism. Her reputation as a leading scholar in the field of Chinese religion (folk-religion, Buddhism, but especially Taoism), combined with her winsome personality, captivating charm and wit, and rare intellectual and moral integrity, attracted an ever growing number of admirers. Senior scholars were proud to be considered her friends. Younger scholars sought, and received, the friendship and guidance of the "elder sister". Every one of her essays and articles, scattered in learned journals, *Festschriften* and encyclopaedias, is a gem also as regards elegance of style, no matter whether she wrote in French, English or German.

In 1985 she extended her *rayonnement* and that of the Institute by founding the *Cahiers*. Her ''Survey of Taoist Studies in the West 1950-90'' in no. 5 of that annual may serve as a random sample of her awe-inspiring and monumental erudition. The string of jewels Anna Seidel has bequeathed us is but an intimation of the expected *magna opera*. Her death at the age of 53 compounds our sense of loss with sorrow over a brilliant scholarly promise that was denied fulfilment—unlike scholars (like E. Schafer) who could look back on a great life's great work nobly accomplished.

Her last years were clouded over by an incredible series of ignominies, humiliations and victimisations to which she was subjected from quarters that shall remained unnamed. To what extent these victimisations undermined her ability to cope with her chronic illness and thus hastened her end, the judges in another world will determine. Scholarship has lost a uniquely lovable ornament, and the community of scholars has lost a uniquely lovable friend. In a moving gesture bridging generation-gaps of both scholarship and friendship, Mrs. Schafer and the Schafer family have arranged for Anna Seidel to be buried next to Edward H. Schafer.

R.J.Z. WERBLOWSKY

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

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Helmut Feld has studied philosophy, classical philology, and history at Trier, Rome and Tübingen. Since 1975 he has taught historical theology at the University of Saarland, and has held a research post at the University of Tübingen since 1982 for the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. Previous publications: *Der Hebräerbrief* (1985) and *Die Anfänge der modernen biblischen Hermeneutik in der spätmittelalterlichen Theologie*. (1977). *Readership:* theologians, historians, art historians, cultural scientists, folklorists.

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